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And Rome and Fellini never let me go. Until that day in 1993. And that funeral . . .

© Gideon Bachmann

Bruce Baillie; filmmaker

I recall nearly falling for film when on one occasion we arrived to set up for our weekly Canyon Cinema show at Oakland College of the Arts. The janitor had locked all the doors and we were obliged to demonstrate our acquired burglar arts by breaking and entering above the stage, descending like Douglas Fairbanks via raised sets and a series of ropes. The show of course went on without a hitch, no one but our apprentices the wiser.

We were not infrequently obliged thus to sidestep the establishment, with our VW vanguard waiting on the Berkeley Fire Department's inevitable last moment arrival, transporting our audience, screen, projector, and film to an alternate mountain retreat—like Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman in Hemingway's late 30s Spain.

And the lovely outdoor theater we enjoyed in Chick Callenbach's Acton Street backyard—the creek and a little shed for our impoverished filmmaking collective.

Chairs gathered by VW from two separate mortuaries. Free bananas from my job on the San Francisco docks. And a free pass, one female and one male, to the local, now deceased, Finnish sauna, as a door prize. *Wirklich, fürs Kino gefallen!*

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James Benning; filmmaker

One afternoon in the early 1960s, I was flipping through the four channels on my television set. It was a 20-inch, b&w Muntz. Upright model. Somewhere between "American Bandstand" and "Cooking with Bretta Greene," images crossed the screen that were completely foreign to me. They changed my way of seeing and thinking. A scary experience for a boy trying to fight his way out of his late teenage years. Eight years later I bought an 8mm Bolex and tried to follow their lead. So now, almost 40 years later, I find this a good time and place to thank Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid for that enlightening and fine afternoon.

© James Benning

Alan Berliner; filmmaker

Because family home movies have played such an important role in several of my films, I am often asked how the presence of a movie camera in early childhood influenced my decision to become a filmmaker.

Everyone naturally assumes that my father, the primary force behind our family chronicles, must have enjoyed putting the old 8mm Bell and Howell in my hands and talking me through my excitement, as with unflappable concentration (*Keep it steady*) I brought my eye to the viewfinder for the very first time (*Try to put the subject in the center of the frame*) and pressed the trigger (*Keep your finger on the button*) before recklessly panning (*Not too fast now*) across the field of view (*Just because it's a movie camera doesn't mean you always have to move it*) until the spring-driven camera motor (*Remember you only have 25 seconds*) would cough itself to a stuttering halt (*Now wind it up and try it again*). All of this paternal encouragement (*You're making movies!*) certainly must have made an indelible mark on the impressionable young filmmaker to be.

Not quite. Consider that a dream sequence.

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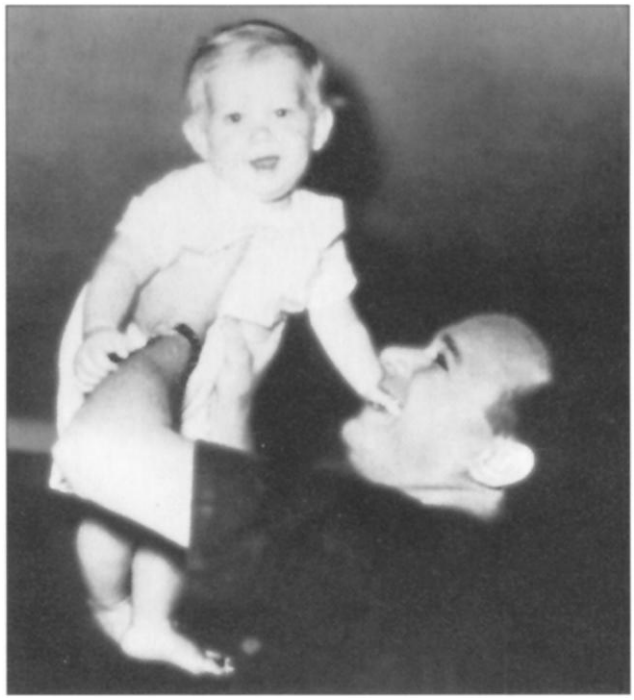


The passage of time . . . father and son

scrawls of a child who eventually becomes a painter. No, oddly enough, despite the fact that I am in a great deal of our home movie footage and am often clearly (along with my mother and sister) the object of its loving gaze, I have absolutely no memory of ever seeing, being seen by, or even touching that movie camera. None at all.

The truth is I never actually "decided" to become a filmmaker; somehow, via a more arduous and circuitous route derived of inner necessity, I grew into one. Much of my adult life has been spent grappling with the conflicts and contradictions of family. With both the presences and absences of memory. When I came upon my family home movies some 20 years later—as if for the very first time—the images I had forgotten about suddenly became triggers for a flood of memories. Using them in my films became a kind of photo-therapy, perhaps even a way toward healing some of the wounds of my childhood.

I still often wonder why my father never offered to share his newfangled mechanical toy with me. Wouldn't any good parent have done so? Didn't he realize how high the stakes were? Like music lessons, stamp collecting, or chess, this could have easily been the seed of a lifelong passion. Maybe it would have motivated me to join the elementary school audiovisual squad, which in turn might have made me aspire to write screenplays, or become an actor. Perhaps even a Hollywood director.

Instead, I became a filmmaker who uses home movies in films about his family.

© Alan Berliner

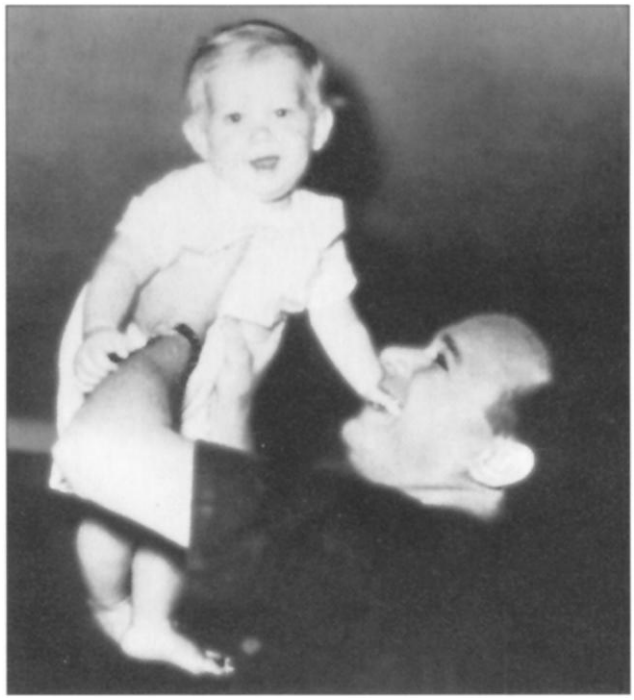
Yvette Biro; scholar, writer

My first memorable movie experience was connected with a little scandal which was often recalled in the family. I was six or seven years old when my mother took me to see *Tales of the Vienna Forest* in one of the big cinemas in Budapest. The opening images showed a sunny hillside with white sheep grazing on it, accompanied by enchanting music. I watched them mesmerized when all of a sudden the sheep faded away and a young couple appeared on the screen. I was terribly disappointed, nagging my mother, asking her, "What happened to the sheep? Why are they gone?" She tried to calm me down, saying it was not important and I had better watch what was going on. But in vain. I insisted on the sheep, stubbornly questioning, and finally in my great unhappiness I broke out crying. My hopeless disappointment was so great that my crying became increasingly loud, so much so that my mother had to take me home. She said I was too foolish for the cinema, and indeed, I was not taken to the movies for many long years.

Well, this was my first encounter with film, suggesting that we really did not get along with each other very well.

Looking back upon that silly episode now, I sometimes question whether I was really so foolish. In fact, I must have been right in demanding that once you begin a sentence you should complete it properly. Is it not the true secret of storytelling to create a suspenseful balance between promise and fulfillment, playing with expectation through surprise and unforseeable gratification?

© Yvette Biro



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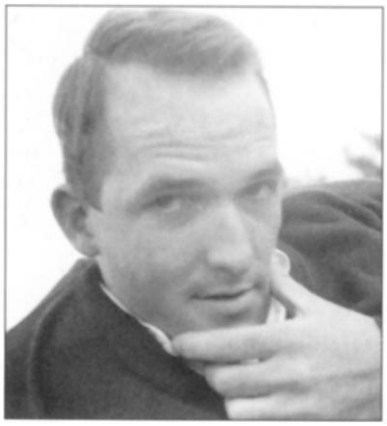
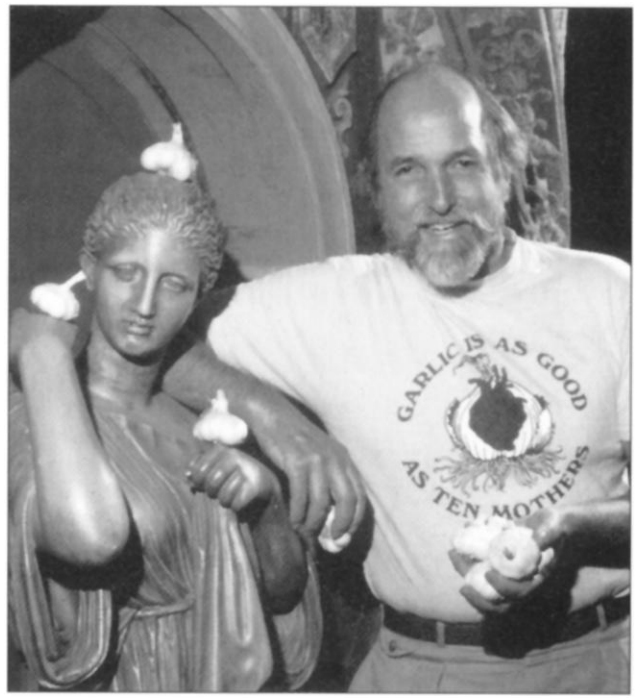




Les Blank; filmmaker

Pinocchio started it all for me, in 1940, when I was four years old. It happened at the Tampa Theater, one of the grand old Depression-era movie palaces thankfully preserved still today, with all of its ornate and excessive decor, in Tampa, Florida. (It was built by the same wizard who created the fabulous Fox Theater in Atlanta and another great one, also still functioning, in Miami.) It has twinkling stars in the ceiling and clouds that float by. Plus lots of bare-breasted women with long flowing tresses seemingly everywhere I looked. One held the water fountain out for me to drink from. Others waved huge candlelabra of light and were strategically situated throughout the wondrous and mysterious darkened stucco caverns. For a breast-fed kid of four it was most stimulating. There was no question of my willingness to suspend disbelief. And suspend it I did. I was instantly sucked into the cartoon from the first frame and I'm not sure I ever returned.

Television in those days was nonexistent, which gave the large-screen experience an even more powerful impact. For years I totally loved everything I saw at the movies. After seeing Tarzan films, I would come home, immediately climb the nearest tree and, swinging from the branches and screaming at the top of my lungs, I would soon release all the pent-up energy that had built up since the previous weekend's adventures within the marvelous silver screen. Then came the cowboy movies and the war movies and the Saturday matinees. My older brother found it endlessly amusing that I would lock myself in my room and shout out "SHAZAM" over and over with increasing vigor, hoping to suddenly become that all-powerful Superman knockoff, Captain Marvel. It never worked. Nor did "OPEN SESAME!"

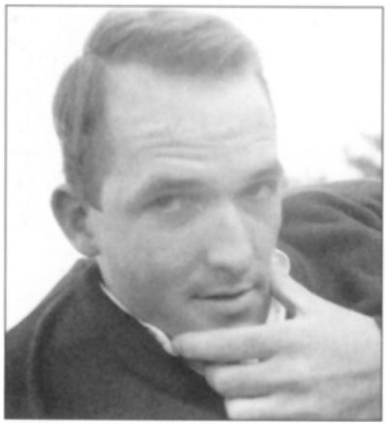
As I grew out of these kinds of films and began to stop jeering during love scenes and actually start forming strong attachments to Jane Russell, Betty Grable, and even Doris Day, I began to become aware of another kind of film. The kind being made in Europe by De Sica (*The Bicycle Thief, Miracle in Milan*) and Fellini (*La Strada, Nights of Cabiria*) and Buñuel (*Los Olvidados*). During a particularly turbulent period in my early 20s when I was a grad school dropout, unrecognized writer, divorced father, and unable to find a job, I discovered Ingmar Bergman. *The Seventh Seal* suddenly showed me that as morbid and depressed as I had become, I could be a whole lot worse off. It was as though open-soul surgery had been performed on me, and the operation was a success. I left the theater absolutely elated and decided to somehow get myself into film.

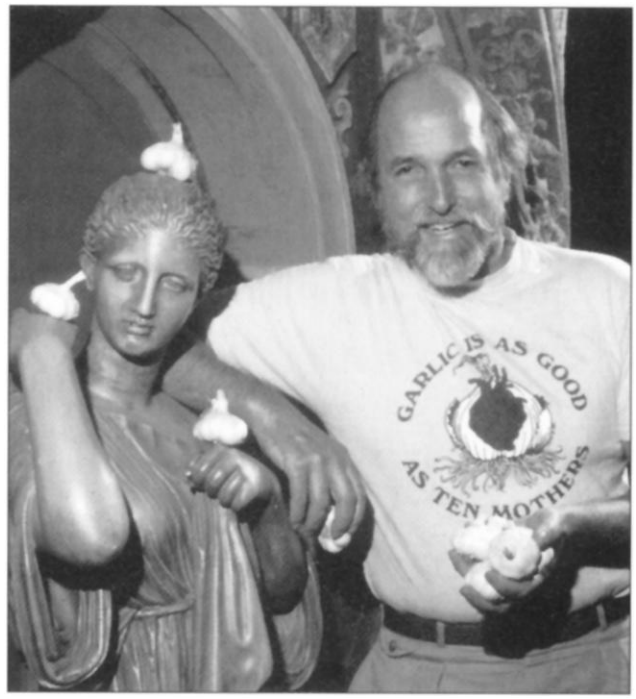
© Les Blank

Kevin Brownlow; film historian

In 1946, I was a very lonely eight-year old at a new school. Grove Park School, Crowborough, Sussex, was run on the military lines beloved of the boarding school authorities of the day. The routine prepared one for a career in the field—up at dawn, cold bath, exercises, ghastly food, and don't forget to call all the masters "Sir." The headmaster might just as well have been in uniform; he was stout and short-tempered and his orders were as well-clipped as his moustache.

He had one saving grace. Every third Sunday he allowed our parents to visit us. They generally took us





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A prefect was allowed to operate the 9.5 mm projector. The films were hired from the Wallace Heaton Film Library in Cheapside, London. The headmaster could not afford a sound projector, so the films were silent—the films of our parents' generation. I recall a brief moment of surprise at the white faces and vast moustaches of the comedians—I actually thought "Good heavens, this is a bit primitive!"—before I was lost in the wonder of it. The fact that you could convert a room into a cinema impressed me deeply. One night, the prefect made a poor job of threading the projector and an early version of *Oliver Twist* jammed in the gate. I had been delighted to observe that the benevolent old man in the story had the same name as mine—the introductory title had raised a murmur of amusement. When the projector jammed and a few frames fluttered down to where I was sitting, I hoped they would depict Mr. Brownlow.

As soon as the film was over, I rushed up to the dormitory, picked up my torch and holding up the frames, switched on. Now I should explain that even today I am not very bright, technically. I may work in television, but I still depend on my 13-year-old daughter to program the video. So I honestly expected a theater-quality image to appear on the dormitory wall. Instead, there was a blur. I walked closer. Still a blur. Not until I was a millimeter or so from the wall did the picture come into focus.

But that night I fell in love with the cinema. I accepted its tremendous demands as inseparable from the wonderful result. I tried to build a projector—but cardboard boxes and a roll of bus tickets were no match for what I saw every third Sunday evening. I begged my parents to give me a projector, and they did. But they misunderstood, and the damn thing turned out to be a film*strip* projector. It was not until I was eleven years old and we had moved to London that I received my first movie projector, and not until a few days after that I made my first discovery of a pile of rare silent films. A photographic shop off Baker Street sold them to me for 1/6d (15 cents?) a reel. When I showed them to my mother, she recognised the stars of her youth—Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., William S. Hart, and Bessie Love. The titles had been changed for home movie release, so, ever optimistic, I went to the local library. The first book I pulled off the shelf in the THEATRE/FILM section fell open at a photograph of my Douglas Fairbanks film—it was *American Aristocracy* (1916). If it was mentioned in this book, my little film must be of some importance. So my researches began, and you could say I became the first silent film historian of eleven.

© Kevin Brownlow

George Paul Csicsery; filmmaker, writer

Coming to America . . .

In January 1951, the passage through North Atlantic winter storms from Bremerhaven to New York took eleven days. Not yet three years old, I got to bunk with my mother in the women's quarters, separated from my father and fifteen-year-old brother, aboard a World War II troop carrier pressed into service to ferry boatloads of DPs (Displaced Persons) to the land of liberty.

The *General Steuart*'s passengers hailed from dozens of countries and spoke over 30 languages. They were Balts, Ukrainians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Russians, Romanians, Croats, Greeks, Slovenes—all had chosen to leave Germany for new lives in the United States. Very few spoke even a word of English. The only relief from the chronic seasickness that was their first language in common on that ship was the nightly movie, the same beautiful color print of *Snow White* projected in the galley every night for a week. With its animated colors and music, and its promise of salvation, it was a magical introduction and our sole preparation for the New World.

People now say that a two-and-a-half-year-old is too young for this kind of memory, but there it is, indelibly etched as the strongest impression of my first coming to America.

© George Paul Csicsery

Terence Davies; filmmaker, writer

A Chill in the Air

He looks stunning with a quiff as big as the Ritz as he walks with friends through the Middle Temple, then exits screen left.

"He'll take silk soon," they say.

"A barrister at 40. A judge by 55. My God."

Over the black-and-white images an oboe (or possible a cor anglais) above divided strings as his Rolls slides down Fleet Street. Muir or Dock Matheson conducting.

"Melville Farr," a lawyer with credentials so perfect they'd get him into paradise.

Dirk Bogarde at his most beautiful, at his most incorruptible.

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A prefect was allowed to operate the 9.5 mm projector. The films were hired from the Wallace Heaton Film Library in Cheapside, London. The headmaster could not afford a sound projector, so the films were silent—the films of our parents' generation. I recall a brief moment of surprise at the white faces and vast moustaches of the comedians—I actually thought "Good heavens, this is a bit primitive!"—before I was lost in the wonder of it. The fact that you could convert a room into a cinema impressed me deeply. One night, the prefect made a poor job of threading the projector and an early version of *Oliver Twist* jammed in the gate. I had been delighted to observe that the benevolent old man in the story had the same name as mine—the introductory title had raised a murmur of amusement. When the projector jammed and a few frames fluttered down to where I was sitting, I hoped they would depict Mr. Brownlow.

As soon as the film was over, I rushed up to the dormitory, picked up my torch and holding up the frames, switched on. Now I should explain that even today I am not very bright, technically. I may work in television, but I still depend on my 13-year-old daughter to program the video. So I honestly expected a theater-quality image to appear on the dormitory wall. Instead, there was a blur. I walked closer. Still a blur. Not until I was a millimeter or so from the wall did the picture come into focus.

But that night I fell in love with the cinema. I accepted its tremendous demands as inseparable from the wonderful result. I tried to build a projector—but cardboard boxes and a roll of bus tickets were no match for what I saw every third Sunday evening. I begged my parents to give me a projector, and they did. But they misunderstood, and the damn thing turned out to be a film*strip* projector. It was not until I was eleven years old and we had moved to London that I received my first movie projector, and not until a few days after that I made my first discovery of a pile of rare silent films. A photographic shop off Baker Street sold them to me for 1/6d (15 cents?) a reel. When I showed them to my mother, she recognised the stars of her youth—Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., William S. Hart, and Bessie Love. The titles had been changed for home movie release, so, ever optimistic, I went to the local library. The first book I pulled off the shelf in the THEATRE/FILM section fell open at a photograph of my Douglas Fairbanks film—it was *American Aristocracy* (1916). If it was mentioned in this book, my little film must be of some importance. So my researches began, and you could say I became the first silent film historian of eleven.

© Kevin Brownlow

George Paul Csicsery; filmmaker, writer

Coming to America . . .

In January 1951, the passage through North Atlantic winter storms from Bremerhaven to New York took eleven days. Not yet three years old, I got to bunk with my mother in the women's quarters, separated from my father and fifteen-year-old brother, aboard a World War II troop carrier pressed into service to ferry boatloads of DPs (Displaced Persons) to the land of liberty.

The *General Steuart*'s passengers hailed from dozens of countries and spoke over 30 languages. They were Balts, Ukrainians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Russians, Romanians, Croats, Greeks, Slovenes—all had chosen to leave Germany for new lives in the United States. Very few spoke even a word of English. The only relief from the chronic seasickness that was their first language in common on that ship was the nightly movie, the same beautiful color print of *Snow White* projected in the galley every night for a week. With its animated colors and music, and its promise of salvation, it was a magical introduction and our sole preparation for the New World.

People now say that a two-and-a-half-year-old is too young for this kind of memory, but there it is, indelibly etched as the strongest impression of my first coming to America.

© George Paul Csicsery

Terence Davies; filmmaker, writer

A Chill in the Air

He looks stunning with a quiff as big as the Ritz as he walks with friends through the Middle Temple, then exits screen left.

"He'll take silk soon," they say.

"A barrister at 40. A judge by 55. My God."

Over the black-and-white images an oboe (or possible a cor anglais) above divided strings as his Rolls slides down Fleet Street. Muir or Dock Matheson conducting.

"Melville Farr," a lawyer with credentials so perfect they'd get him into paradise.

Dirk Bogarde at his most beautiful, at his most incorruptible.

The film is *Victim.*

While I watch it there is a growing fear within me, while I watch it I know something I do not wish to recognize.

Bogarde arrives at the police station.

Bogarde is interviewed.

Bogarde goes to the door and turns.

"You know, of course," the policeman says, "that Barratt was a homosexual."

The word drops like a bombshell into the quiet cinema.

"I had gathered that," says Bogarde softly.

I cannot breathe.

I go stiff with horror.

Now it has a name. A public name.

It is the name daubed on Melville Farr's garage door.

It is the name implied since secondary school but always half-known anyway.

It is the name.

I now know what I am and what the world will think I am.

I know the name.

I have the word.

"Queer."

The word has been given flesh, it has been given an especial meaning.

And now I will never be the same again.

"Jesus—mercy . . . Mary—help. . . ."

© Terence Davies

David Ehrenstein; writer, critic

Seeing Margaret O'Brien in *Meet Me in St. Louis*

New York City, 1951. Judy Garland was making what would be the first of many "comebacks" at the Palace. And so the management of the Capitol Theater a few blocks away elected to capitalize on the occasion by reviving two of her biggest MGM hits: *Meet Me in St. Louis (*1945) and *Babes in Arms* (1939).

Revivals of "old" films being rare at that time (save for Disney cartoons), this vintage double feature was something of an event in and of itself. It certainly caught my mother's eye. Having seen both films when they came out, she sensed I would enjoy them, and planned a trip to the city (we lived in the suburb of Queens) especially to see them. And so, one afternoon, I found myself climbing what appeared to my four-year-old eyes to be the enormous steps of the Capitol's balcony. "We can get good seats up here," my mother insisted, sensing my fear of both the darkness and the height. But once we arrived, I knew she was right. The balcony was the perfect place for films like these. And so I settled back in my seat to enjoy what would come to number among my first conscious memories.

I don't remember much of the films we saw first. I suspect it must have been *Babes in Arms* (it would be several years before "seeing it from the beginning" would become a moviegoing prerequisite). But whether first or last, all I remember of *Babes* was the title number. Through the "small town" set, cast members marched in military formation, pausing only to leap over picket fences as the imposing baritone of Nelson-Eddy-wannabe Douglas McPhail echoed with a force the Capitol wouldn't hear again—until *2001: A Space Odyssey* premiered there some seventeen years later. What Mickey, Judy, and their friends were up to in this very loose adaptation of the Rodgers and Hart hit had little interest for me. *Meet Me in St. Louis* was another story. It was in color. The sets and costumes were prettier. And most important of all, it had Margaret O' Brien.

Margaret O'Brien was fourteen years old in 1951. But in the 1945 evocation of 1903 called *Meet Me in St. Louis*, she was all of eight years old. And as long as a print or video of the film exists, she always will be. Twice my age, the Margaret O'Brien of *Meet Me in St. Louis* was just my height. I could identify with her impatience with the other children—pushing her out of the way of the bonfire in the Halloween sequence and telling her to go home because she was "too little." I didn't understand what was going on in the Halloween

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sequence. But then neither did O'Brien's character, "Tootie." She'd elected to "kill the Brokoffs" (neighbors who lived down the street on the beautifully detailed set) by throwing flour at them as demanded by the other children. Walking away from the bonfire, wind and shadows whipping around her, she's clearly terrified. So was I, for O'Brien was enacting the fear I'd just experienced walking into the Capitol balcony. In other words, I *identified* with her.

It only lasted a moment. It ran about as long as the course of Tootie's on-screen fears. But in those brief moments, I was Margaret O'Brien. This odd experience never repeated itself. The next time I was taken to the movies—to see a first-run item called *Singin' in the Rain*—no spacio-temporal anxiety awaited me. I wasn't Gene Kelly, or Debbie Reynolds, or even Donald O'Connor—though the first thing I did when I got home was try to recreate the "Make 'Em Laugh" number in our living room. He was an actor. I was a spectator. That was all.

Mountains of film theory have been devoted to what happened to me in the Capitol balcony during *Meet Me in St. Louis*. From Bazin's treatises on film as "reality" to Jean-Pierre Oudart's "suture," to Christian Metz's cinematic psychoanalysis—with the spectator (to borrow from T.S. Eliot) "spread out against the sky [of the movie theater screen], like a patient etherised upon a table"—to Peter Gidal's stern warnings against the dangerous potential of any recognizable image to cloud men's minds and distort their values, we've heard a lot of sobersided blather of what might befall the "unconscious" unwitting four-year-olds. The conscious lives of adults, however, have passed without comment.

"I'm the most horrible!" says Tootie, reveling in her Brokoff-killing triumph. And indeed she is. But that was in 1945. And *that* was in 1951. And *now* it's 1998. And I'm dreaming of MGM.

© David Ehrenstein

Péter Forgács; filmmaker

But the Movie . . .

In the summer of 1955, a hot and dry day's evening—my first ever cinema vision in Nagymaros. Not far from the beautiful curve of the Danube where the monstrous dam was planned that would wound the face of the river and mountains some 33 years later, but now, hopefully, thanks—to the protests? to the fall of the Berlin Wall?—it will never be erected.

But the movie . . . some kilometers down the riverside in Nagymaros, my Dad, Marcell's, work place, the Móra Ferenc children's book publishing house had, (or rented?) a summer resort place. Normally the confiscated villas of the pre-war gentile and bourgeois owners served as the "commie" state companies' summer and winter resorts.

But the movie . . . Mom was in the hospital with Zsuzsi, my youngest sister, the fourth Forgács sibling; just two months after her birth, hepatitis felled both of them, so Dad—who had very little practice in looking after anybody else than himself and the favored ideology—cared for us, the other three.

But the movie . . . and the summer, at the height of the season and the wise, wide river Danube. But Dad was not all alone; I guess some colleague's wife must have helped him with the daily routine. At least, I could never imagine him doing it alone, dressing us up so carefully for the photo he took.

The hysterical tension before the taking of that image; the fight to get the tiny dream-like "feather-grass hat." But the photographer's task turned out well, as you can see: we look great—like three cakes. My brother, the favorite Bandi, Bandi, "Mogyibandi" (at home his nickname was "Cinebandi"—in Budapest he and Marcell often visited the Hiradó [Newsreel] cinema, near the kindergarten. He is a scriptwriter and playwright today). So, Bandi* smiles as always, to please the Beast. Vera, a good girl—she knows how and what they want, if they ask you to smile; and me, with the halfway-between-cry-and-smile of the frightened lizard, "Just let it be over."

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I became interested in film production when I began studying acting with Lee Strasberg and Elia Kazan at the Actors Studio in the late 40s. During that period, I played feature roles in the films of two now legendary filmmakers: Louis de Rochemont and William Alexander. Quite coincidentally, these two men were deeply involved in documentary film production. I was very inspired by the movies they were doing.

My interest in the documentary as an educational tool was further increased during a protracted period of study in Afro-American and Ancient African History. I became outraged by the wanton misrepresentation of the African and African-American experience in both the academic and media communities of the Western world, and America in particular. I decided to get behind the camera and produce documentary and features films which, in my small way, would help counter the one-hundred year campaign of vilification in the media against the people of the African diaspora.

© William Greaves

Barbara Hammer; filmmaker

Maya Deren and Me

What a lovely day it is. I work out in the gym, I walk to my studio in the warm morning sun of spring. Today is my birthday. I am entering my 60th year fit and happy. Who would think that the last 30 years would be devoted to film reels and editing light flickers? Maya Deren caused it all.

I was a late bloomer of 30 before entering film school at San Francisco State. I'd tried many different vocations, from bank teller, juvenile hall counselor, and playground director, but none of these fit. Something inside wasn't being expressed. I decided to be an artist, and instead of painting, which I love dearly, I chose film, because the discipline included aesthetics as well as philosophical inquiry and politics. In the Film History I lecture there were only a few outspoken women, budding feminists we. Connie, Veronica, and I always sat together and critiqued the ongoing academy of male filmmakers whose works we saw day in, day out. My arm grew tired of asking the questions: Where was Pudovkin's mother? Were there no women on Vertov's film train? And why oh why was Gish portrayed as helpless?

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different sensibility, an aesthetic I intuitively understood. For the first time, a woman's cinema filled the screen in this dark, cavernous lecture hall. According to this "history of the cinema," the screen had been blank from a woman's point of view. I knew then that I had a lifetime's work ahead of me.

Some years later I was invited to Washington University in Saint Louis, Missouri, for a screening. I was a guest of Professor Jacqueline Zita, who had borrowed my films to study them for an essay she later published in *Jump Cut.* This was the first time my films were being studied critically. Early in the morning I walked down the stairs from my second-floor bedroom to the music of the sound track from *Dyketactics* (1974), my second 16mm film. I had a strange sensation that I was walking in the footsteps of Maya Deren down the stairway of *Meshes of the Afternoon.* These past 30 years have been an ongoing love affair with the moving image, a love affair I share with Maya Deren along with our Ukrainian heritage.

© Barbara Hammer

Faith Hubley; filmmaker

On the way to the subway on Times Square carrying my books, my gymnasium suit, and lunch hastily made, I impulsively turn the wrong way. On 42nd Street, a sea of brightly lit theater marquees shine in the gray mist. I walk to the Apollo Theater, home of the foreign film. I considered cutting high school. I had never seen a foreign film. The film of the day is *L'orage,* which I know from high school French means "storm." I study the stills. Face to face with Jean-Louis Barrault, I make my decision. The admission is ten cents before 1 p.m. My subway fare equals the price of admission. Done!

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I see *L'orage* three times. Another language, another sky! The storm within, the storm without. I fall deeply, helplessly in love with the cinema. And I still am.

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Not until I went to college at the start of the 60s—an abortive spell which ended in expulsion—did the cinema enter my life, by a kind of backdoor route. I was in a design school and Stan Vanderbeek, a 50s boho who made simple politically pointed pixillated animations with newspaper and magazine cut-outs, came to visit, showing how a cheap Bolex and some smarts could equal some pretty interesting film. And then in some Ukrainian Church basement (literally underground) screening, some fellow whom Stan Brakhage had annointed a future cinematic genius showed a pretty ponderous and awful psychodrama, an imitation of a Bergman film, with hokey cigarette fog (you could see the four trails of smoke floating up from the below-the-lens-mounted fags, like a lame Tarkovsky effect). I distinctly remember, in perfect Philistine fashion, thinking—and maybe even saying—"If that's considered good, I can do a lot better than that. I oughta get into this racket." Or something along those lines. The same bleak autumn, as the Cuban missile crisis promised a shortened life, huddled with friends awaiting the nuclear fry, drinking lousy wine and smoking dope, I plotted an escape to the safety of New Zealand, selling all my worldly possessions to come up with a grand $800. By the time I had things organized for the trip, the missile crisis had blown over. With that wad of cash at hand, for some completely unclear reason, I decided to become a filmmaker, bought the cheapest boat ticket to Europe I could, and while waiting a month for the departure date saw two films a day, from old Hollywood classics to Italian neo-realists to early Godard and such at the old Clark Theater in Chicago, and then I went to New York where I picked up a lovely Bolex for a special deal for $500 and sailed to Italy with $50 in my pocket. I've been making films (and doing many other things) since. After that cram lesson at the Clark in '62, my moviegoing dropped to precious little, as it still sits today. I can't say I love the cinema at all—I do love good art, with or without perforation holes, and frankly the odds of seeing it in the celluloid form is discouragingly uncommon. Rather than walk out, I usually don't walk in.

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Republic picture I was watching. The moment her blond curls ignited the film emulsion and the sound track issued forth with her musical theme, I was hooked. Here were people not dissimilar to my mom and dad, frumpy yet friendly folk, who instead of driving a truck or working in a bookbinding factory, were employed in a dream factory of candy-coated imagery that rumbled with melodramatic melodies which plucked the heartstrings.

Here was sadness too: the obvious lack of talent which weighed down the actress more heavily than her expanding physique. And as for the actor, well: the white dusting of lacquered filaments were cemented to his scalp more securely than the denture cream used to keep intact a smile that in days of old blazed with glory.

It was all here on the big screen: the dreams and despair of our moviegoing culture. My heritage as a ticket buyer into the human race.

But who financed these kinetic things? What was the motivation that created these gigantic moving billboards which broadcast to the world these icons of color-coordinated creatures? IT WAS LOVE AND OBSESSION. The love of a producer for a European ice skater fell on her face more easily on a soundstage than on the slippery surface that spawned her notoriety. Picture after picture ruined by a lackluster lovely leaden enough to sink the loftiest cinematic creations with her abominable acting. But I loved her too! If a producer was willing to star her in a picture then I could put my mom or my friends' moms in pictures too! Evidently all one had to do was to tell them how to open a door with some nice, atmospheric lighting in place and have the music come in at the right moment. All you needed was that—AND LOVE. Who cares if David Brian's thespian utterances whistled through his choppers like the north wind . . . he was crazy enough to memorize gibberish even I could write! Here were truly crazy people worth emulating because it made growing-up seem like fun: you can be in your fifties and still play-act, have fake fist fights, and tumble on the floor with robust Czechoslovakians. These were my kind of people from an exotic tribe I wanted to infiltrate. It was all make-believe plus makeup and the window dressing of everything that was so obviously sad and vulnerable. Something very beautiful too. The human imagination imagining the best way to make the worst look good. This became a defining film moment for me.

© George Kuchar

Phillip Lopate; writer, critic

Seeing *All Quiet on the Western Front*

I must have been about fourteen years old at the time, working as a camp counselor in upstate New York in the mid-1950s. Hi-Ona-Hill was a pretty strange summer camp, I realized even then—for one thing, its clientele was an unsorted mixture of mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed kids; for another, the staff was not only untrained to deal with their charges' needs but included a number of ghetto teenagers who had gotten into trouble with the law and been placed under the custody of the camp owner, Gloria, a beautiful embattled black woman with revolutionary, CP-type politics. Gloria, who had a sort of paranoid lynching obsession, used to point to an elm and say, "If those hick neighbors up the road knew what was going on here, they would hang me from that tree."

But I needed a job, I was in my "White Negro" phase, eager to hang out with the homeboys and girls, and I was facinated with Gloria. Though she kept purging different staff members, complete with her Hi-Ona-Hill version of Stalinist show trials, I was vain enough to think that with my precocious, adult-wannabe intelligence, I could stay on her good side. By mid-summer, I was riding high in Gloria's favor, and even escorted her, like a date, to the communal barn where we were to be treated to a screening of Lewis Milestone's 1930 "classic" film, *All Quiet on the Western Front.*

Why such an odd choice? In retrospect, I can see that the picture, like Paul Robeson records of negro spirituals and Khatchatourian concerts, fit neatly into the Communist Party culture of the 50s because of its director's well-known left-wing sympathies and its stance against the "bosses" who had sent the young men off to die.

In my youth I was familiar with that title because my parents had read and discussed the popular Erich Maria Remarque novel, maybe the film as well, and so I was looking forward to an experience of deep, adult, artistic seriousness. The 16mm projector was set up on a chair in the back. I can't believe that Gloria made the campers watch such an inappropriate film also, but she must have, since we, the counselors, were all there, and there was no one else to look after the kids. In fact, now I remember that the audience grew very restless. *All Quiet* is an early sound film whose dialogue is sometimes hard to make out under the best of circumstances. I was used to the matinee fare of Hollywood action movies and quickly became bored with what

Republic picture I was watching. The moment her blond curls ignited the film emulsion and the sound track issued forth with her musical theme, I was hooked. Here were people not dissimilar to my mom and dad, frumpy yet friendly folk, who instead of driving a truck or working in a bookbinding factory, were employed in a dream factory of candy-coated imagery that rumbled with melodramatic melodies which plucked the heartstrings.

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Seeing *All Quiet on the Western Front*

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But I needed a job, I was in my "White Negro" phase, eager to hang out with the homeboys and girls, and I was facinated with Gloria. Though she kept purging different staff members, complete with her Hi-Ona-Hill version of Stalinist show trials, I was vain enough to think that with my precocious, adult-wannabe intelligence, I could stay on her good side. By mid-summer, I was riding high in Gloria's favor, and even escorted her, like a date, to the communal barn where we were to be treated to a screening of Lewis Milestone's 1930 "classic" film, *All Quiet on the Western Front.*

Why such an odd choice? In retrospect, I can see that the picture, like Paul Robeson records of negro spirituals and Khatchatourian concerts, fit neatly into the Communist Party culture of the 50s because of its director's well-known left-wing sympathies and its stance against the "bosses" who had sent the young men off to die.

In my youth I was familiar with that title because my parents had read and discussed the popular Erich Maria Remarque novel, maybe the film as well, and so I was looking forward to an experience of deep, adult, artistic seriousness. The 16mm projector was set up on a chair in the back. I can't believe that Gloria made the campers watch such an inappropriate film also, but she must have, since we, the counselors, were all there, and there was no one else to look after the kids. In fact, now I remember that the audience grew very restless. *All Quiet* is an early sound film whose dialogue is sometimes hard to make out under the best of circumstances. I was used to the matinee fare of Hollywood action movies and quickly became bored with what

seemed to me a talky, hammily acted, solemn, overly symbolic picture. (All right, I probably didn't know the word "symbolic" then, but I certainly felt, with a kid's critical instincts, when they were trying to put something over on me or make some larger message out of a scene than it deserved.) The film, you may remember, follows a pair of boots from one soldier to another, and ends with the protagonist being shot as he reaches for a *butterfly*, for God's sake, just as the news of the war's ending is being announced.

So yeah, I was hating it, absolutely in sync with all the other kids in the barn who snickered and squirmed. But then I thought, This picture is supposed to be a classic. Maybe it's too subtle for me, maybe what's good about it is going right over my head. Yes, it's boring, but that might be intentional. Why would the filmmaker purposely refrain from providing the sort of entertainment touches that most movies have? Maybe this is the nature of the film as art. . . . That something could be *intentionally* boring, so as to lower the temperature of the audience and get them to think more about the ideas underneath (in this case, antiwar issues), or or simply to put them more in meditative touch with their inner lives, hit me as a revelation—which then carried me through years of patiently ingesting film classics, and helped develop in me a positive appetite for slow, meditative filmmakers who might strike the hoi polloi as boring. My love for Antonioni, Bresson, Dreyer, Ozu, Mizoguchi, Naruse, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Kiarostami . . . I owe it all, in a sense, to *All Quiet on the Western Front.*

After the screening ended, I was able to score many points with Gloria, discussing the nuances of key scenes. Not that it did me any good in the long run. My purge came later on that summer. I left the camp in disgrace, an enemy of the people. But that took nothing away from my cinematic illumination. The odd thing is that a few years ago I re-watched *All Quiet on the Western Front.* It struck me as talky, hammy, solemn, overly symbolic. Too late, I realized that I had been right—my kid self had been on target as usual. Like a jerk, I had talked myself into admiring a film that was pure hype. When I read a piece by Garry Wills recently in which he reverently put forth *All Quiet on the Western Front* as a neglected classic, I thought, Oh no, the poor sap, he fell for it too! What was his excuse?

© Phillip Lopate

Leonard Maltin; writer, critic

First Light

My mother tells me that she took me to the fabled Roxy Theatre in Manhattan, where we lived at the time, but I have no recollection of that. The first image I recall is that of the bright golden sun in the final scene of Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.*

This requires a few words of explanation.

The year was 1955, and *Snow White* was in one of its periodic theatrical reissues. The theater where it was playing in New York City was the Guild, which is located behind Radio City Music Hall, at the end of the same long city block. (The location of this nice little theater has always seemed to be one of the great mistakes—or afterthoughts—in movie theater history.)

In those days, movies played continuously—which the unfortunate movie nuts of the past 20 years have never experienced. Oh, what they're missing! To be able to stay all day, if you liked, and watch a film over and over again, without paying an extra cent, was sheer heaven. It was also, in the days before television and VCR's, a great baby-sitting service for parents.

But the system did have its perils, chief among them the ability to walk in at the wrong moment and see the end of the movie. (I did this, once, when the Trans Lux in Manhattan—for decades a famous newsreel theater—showed Republic Pictures' *The Adventures of Captain Marvel* serial in the late 1960s, to supposedly cash in on the Batman craze launched by the popular TV series. Unaware that the theater was running the serial continuously, from 9:00 in the morning, and not wanting to miss a moment of the four-hour marathon, I marched into the theater a few

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minutes before 1:00 in the afternoon and saw the unmasking of the secret villain, The Scorpion, from the end of Chapter 12! I've never arrived early for a movie since.)

So it was that my mother led me by the hand into the onrushing crowd of mommies and kids who were leaving *Snow White*—so that we could get a good seat. This means I saw the last moments of the film first, and while I don't remember any surprise being spoiled, my young eyes widened at the sight of that incredible golden sun as Prince Charming took Snow White off to her happy ending.

I've never forgotten that moment, and I wonder if it had something to do with my lifelong fascination with all things Disney. Perhaps, perhaps not, but it did make me aware, at a tender age (four, going on five) that movies could galvanize my attention—and show me things that would stay with me for a long, long time.

© Leonard Maltin

Chris Marker; filmmaker

It was a funny-shaped object. A small tin box with irregularly rounded ends, a rectangular aperture in the middle and on the opposite side a small lens, the size of a nickel. You had to gently insert a piece of film—real film, with sprockets and all—in the upper part, then a tiny rubber wheel blocked it, and by turning the corresponding knob the film unrolled, frame by frame. To tell the truth, each frame represented a different shot, so the whole thing looked more like a slide show than a home cinema, yet the shots were beautifully printed stills out of celebrated pictures: Chaplin's, *Ben Hur*, Abel Gance's *Napoleon.* . . . If you were rich, you could lock that small unit in a sort of magic lantern and project it on your wall (or screen, if you were *very* rich). I had to satisfy myself with the minimal version: pressing my eye against the lens, and watching. That forgotten contraption was called Pathéorama. You could read it in golden letters on black, with the legendary Pathé rooster singing against a rising sun.

The egotistic pleasure of watching by myself images pertaining to the unfathomable realm of Movieland very soon had a dialectical byproduct: when I couldn't even imagine having anything in common with the process of filmmaking (whose basic principles were naturally far beyond my comprehension), there something of the film itself was within my

reach, pieces of celluloid that were not that different from the photographic negatives when they came back from the lab. Something I could touch and feel, something of the real world. And why (insinuated my own dialectical Jiminy Cricket) couldn't I in turn *make* something of the same kind? All I needed was translucent material and the right measurements. (The sprockets were there to look good, the rubber wheel just ignored them.) So, with scissors, tracing paper, and glue, I managed to get a proper copy of the Pathéorama model tape. Then, screen by screen, I began to draw a few poses of my cat (who else?) with captions inbetween. And all of a sudden, my cat belonged to the same universe as the characters in *Ben Hur* or *Napoleon.* I had gone through the looking glass.

Of all my school buddies, Jonathan was the most prestigious; he was mechanically minded and quite inventive, he made up maquettes of theaters with rolling curtains and flashing lights, and a miniature big band emerging from the abyss while a cranked gramophone was playing "Hail the Conquering Hero." So it was natural that he was the first to whom I wished to show my masterwork. I was rather pleased with the result, and I unrolled the adventures of the cat Riri which I presented as "my movie." Jonathan managed to get me sobered up: "Movies are supposed to move, stupid," he said. "Nobody can do a movie with still images."

Thirty years passed. Then I made *La Jetée.*

© Chris Marker

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Yvonne Rainer; filmmaker

It was around 1950. I was a moody, solitary, asocial sixteen-year-old, addicted to frequent relief-filled languishing at the Clay and the Larkin, the only theaters in San Francisco to show foreign films. I had long been familiar with the breed. From the early 40s my father, an Italian-born French- and Italian-speaking emigré, would take me to the Sunday afternoon screenings at the Palace of the Legion of Honor out near the beach. I can still induce the chillies by invoking memories of Falconetti's huge suffering face and shaven head in Dreyer's *Jeanne d'Arc*. For that eight- or nine-year-old, the setting was magical. Before the lights faded in the baroque, perfectly round basement theater gilded like a jewel box, I craned my head to study the swirling panoramas of cupids, angels, nymphs, and plunging horses on the ceiling. The low murmur of voices—adults and children alike—matched the subdued lighting emanating from the wall sconces, creating an ambience of pleasureful anticipation.

So it must have been on a Friday or a Saturday afternoon that I went by myself to the Clay and saw Cocteau's *Orphée*. I remember walking down Fillmore Street afterwards in a state of rapture, my brain on fire, so it seemed, suddenly unburdened of my habitual shroud of adolescent dread. In the following week I saw the film three more times. I haven't seen it since.

One other kino-epiphany: in the early 50s the late Michael Grieg started the San Francisco Cinema Guild. A native New Yorker who had emigrated to San Francisco after the war, Grieg would become a well-known Bay Area poet, novelist, and journalist. But at this point he was still struggling to support his family. The SF Cinema Guild was modeled after Ed Landberg's Berkeley Cinema Guild and took place on weekends in the Green Street Theater, a former burlesque house in North Beach (half-naked female caryatids still supported the proscenium arch). I was the ticket vendor. After selling my last ticket, I would go upstairs and look at the films. Here was where I first saw Renoir, Vigo, and Keaton. Mike always accompanied the silent films with music he chose from his collection of 33 1/3 rpm records. Thus *The General* was accompanied by an orchestral version of *The Threepenny Opera* and was shown in this way four or five times on one weekend. I sat through every screening, mesmerized. To this day I cannot look at *The General* without hearing the Kurt Weill themes.

©Yvonne Rainer

Donald Richie; scholar, writer

First Steps in Film

Lon Chaney grips the ankles of the prompter, pulls, and I—two—am carried hysterical from the Sigma Theater in Lima, Ohio. A mad elephant rampages its way through a whole village and I—five—am so entranced that I plead to stay to see it twice. Refused, I chant "Chang," I am told, for some hours. In *Moon over Miami*, Betty Grable had John Payne over for dinner and suggests gas house eggs. "What the heck is that?" he asks. "Well, you make a hole in a piece of bread," begins Betty, and I, going on fifteen, having observed the process, go home and successfully make some myself. Seventeen, I wander into the Sigma, as usual not even glancing at the marquee, and am initially irritated that the projectionist, occasionally rumored drunk, has mixed up the reels: first some old man dies, obviously the end of the picture; then the newreel abruptly comes on; then we're back to the old man only he's younger. What the heck? I think, then the scales fall from my eyes. I see life itself (which I had always thought an *alternative* to the movies) in all of its patterned richness. I sit through *Citizen Kane* three times and emerge a sighted person, my education complete.

Fear and rapture, instruction and understanding—I am prepared for a life of no matter what, knowing that movies can show me its shape, and that I can with perfect trust follow their lead—no matter where.

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Ritz Crackers

My grandfather owned a chain of movie theaters in northwest Alabama between 1919 and 1960 and my father had worked for him since the 30s, so I can't remember a time when movies weren't part of my life. My first taste probably would have been a Disney feature around the age of four in 1947, but I'd rather focus on an event I can still remember vividly: attending a double bill of *Li'l Abner* and *I Married a Witch* at the Ritz Theater in Sheffield on Labor Day, 1949.

My parents, en route to a barbecue, deposited their three oldest boys—David (eight), Jonny (six), and Alvin (four)—with a teenage black babysitter named Earl at the Ritz's colored entrance. Jim Crow laws dictated that we all sit in the colored balcony if we were to sit together, so we followed Earl up the stairs to the right of the box office—a new and mysterious space for us—and found ourselves in the highest tier of the auditorium. Down below were pink sea-shell murals lit with fluorescent lights, and distant black-and-white images on the screen. It was Alvin's first time at the movies, but the rest of us by then were seasoned veterans.

Li'l Abner, without the color of the comic strip in the Sunday paper, seemed bogus, and bogus hillbilly at that; but David and Earl, both schooled in a macho preference for raucous art, liked nothing more than a bogus barnyard. For Alvin and me, bogus mansions and graveyards were better, and *I Married a Witch* a sweeter brew. The main moment I'm left with is a shot of two smoky essences in bottles, the sound of dry autumn leaves rustling through a chill night wind, and the voices of Cecil Kellaway and Veronica Lake, father and daughter, conversing from their adjacent bottles. Most of this has to do with Veronica Lake—the deep, husky voice of a smoky spirit whose name and form conjured up a feminine aura of water, vapor, air, smoke, and flesh, a floating dream that any boy of six would be proud to be married to. Having just seen *Topper* across the river at the Princess at the week before, I was already primed for just this sort of metaphysics—enhanced still further by having just seen the trailer for *The Invisible Man* right after *Li'l Abner*, giving me all I needed to complete my erotic evaporation fantasies. Indeed, by the time the credits of René Clair's supernatural comedy came on, the ads and title had already done their work, and I was already invisibly inside that bottle too, ready to share in Veronica's throaty vibrato.

The Ritz is still standing, after being restored in the 80s and used ever since as a site for little theater productions and country music concerts. I visited the tail end of one of those concerts a few weeks ago—long enough to see the pink seashell murals and what remains of the colored entrance outside. It would be satisfying to report that the theater felt haunted, but I was the one who felt like a ghost—a phantom hankering after lost textures, wispy breaths as diaphanous as the lake of Lady Veronica.

© Jonathan Rosenbaum

Michael Sragow; writer, critic

My Discovery of Quease-in-Art

As a child living till age seven in the small town of Roosevelt, Long Island (best known in entertainment circles for producing Howard Stern and Eddie Murphy), my first-loved films came at me shorn and in clumps, via television. They appeared on "The Early Show "or "Picture for a Sunday Afternoon" or "Million Dollar Movie." If my older brother insisted on watching scary stuff (and the scariest I could take then was *King Kong*), I'd sit beside the big chair in the living room and duck behind it when the tension became excruciating. In that peek-a-boo position I first experienced just how potent a movie image could be.

Perhaps because of my brother's persistent attempts to introduce me to macabre film fantasies, I had (and have) always reacted personally to movies made from twisted-brother tales, like the 1941 rendering of Dumas' *The Corsican Brothers*, in which Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., played swashbucking twins who felt each other's pain—literally. My all-time trauma champ, though, was James Whale's 1939 version of Dumas' *The Man in the Iron Mask*, which I first saw in 1958, at age six. It chronicles how the twin of Louis XIV, a virtuous fellow named Philippe, was smuggled away at birth to save the crown, and then horribly punished when he grew up and became a threat to the wicked king. Since Dumas framed the story as the climactic Three Musketeers adventure, I

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Michael Sragow; writer, critic

My Discovery of Quease-in-Art

As a child living till age seven in the small town of Roosevelt, Long Island (best known in entertainment circles for producing Howard Stern and Eddie Murphy), my first-loved films came at me shorn and in clumps, via television. They appeared on "The Early Show "or "Picture for a Sunday Afternoon" or "Million Dollar Movie." If my older brother insisted on watching scary stuff (and the scariest I could take then was *King Kong*), I'd sit beside the big chair in the living room and duck behind it when the tension became excruciating. In that peek-a-boo position I first experienced just how potent a movie image could be.

Perhaps because of my brother's persistent attempts to introduce me to macabre film fantasies, I had (and have) always reacted personally to movies made from twisted-brother tales, like the 1941 rendering of Dumas' *The Corsican Brothers*, in which Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., played swashbucking twins who felt each other's pain—literally. My all-time trauma champ, though, was James Whale's 1939 version of Dumas' *The Man in the Iron Mask*, which I first saw in 1958, at age six. It chronicles how the twin of Louis XIV, a virtuous fellow named Philippe, was smuggled away at birth to save the crown, and then horribly punished when he grew up and became a threat to the wicked king. Since Dumas framed the story as the climactic Three Musketeers adventure, I

was unprepared for the multifaceted horror of the mask. Louis, here an exquisite sadist, designs the mask as his "masterpiece": he molds it to Philippe's head and bolts it at the neck, in order to choke the victim as soon as his beard thickens. So unsettling was Whale's flair for tortured ironic imagery that the mask blotted out the rest of the film for me; for decades I presumed that Whale had grabbed the audience with it near the beginning, whereas actually it crops up two-thirds of the way through. The mask doesn't merely cover Philippe's face but transforms it into the hood of a pathetic humanoid or automaton, with rivets circling the brow and square slashes for sight and breath reducing the prisoner's eyes and mouth to rubbery rectangles. (If I were just a little older, I might have realized that Whale was the man who had given us Boris Karloff's *Frankenstein*.) As soon the mask appeared, the back of the chair wasn't protection enough for me. I scrammed upstairs and sat in the hallway, unwilling to come down if there were any chance I'd see that thing on the screen. I hid from it so long that when I ventured back to the living room, the house was dark and empty—everyone else had gone to get ice cream. Rather than be alone with the TV that held that grotesque portrait, I grabbed a flashlight, went outside, and waited for my family to return.

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© Chick Strand

Eliseo Subiela; filmmaker

It Doesn't Hurt the First Time

At the beginning it was only an escape that produced an inexplicable pleasure and excitement. Like playing hooky in school. A need of which I was not entirely conscious. But it wasn't love. That's why it didn't hurt. Love would come much later. Because it's not possible to be in love with cinema without having experienced something of life. It was the same for me with the tango, Mozart, and red wine. In the beginning it was just to go with the gang to the movies to make girl-like imitations of Tarzan's yell until they kicked us out or to shout, "Fuck her, Schubert!" at a

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saccharine biography of Franz Schubert, the impoverished suffering of the great composer having been narrated in opulent Hollywood Technicolor.

My remembrances are like scenes from old films that have been saved from oblivion. But like those films, they are fragmented and with unexpected cuts. I was eleven and had a hand-cranked 16mm projector, "Hollywood" brand, that they had bought me at Casa America. The only film with which I tortured friends and relatives (their previous outlay having entitled them to admission) was an animated drawing of Patorzú (an Argentine animated character based on a comic strip). One Saturday that I remember, Papá bought me a Chaplin short that's no longer around; I didn't exactly "lose" it—more likely it "vanished" from overuse.

Later, with my parents and my brother, we went to eat at La Emiliana (a typical Buenos Aires restaurant in those days). And then, to the Opera movie theater to see *Tren Internacional* with Mirtha Legrand and Alberto Closas. I don't know if it was because of the elegant staterooms of the train, the disquieting beauty of the actress—when the leading man looked away I thought she was looking at me—or the little stars on the ceiling of the auditorium, but I remember that afternoon that something especially magical filled me with confused sensations which I didn't know what to do with at the time.

One's real neighborhood is not the one you're born in, but rather the place where you had your first fistfight and loved your first woman. And that neighborhood was called Cañitas, between the Palermo Hippodrome and the Military Hospital. There I had an uncle who looked forward to his vactions so he could take me to the movies every day. I looked forward to his vacations more than to my own. Every day we went to the Coliseo Palermo, the Nacional, or the Park to see triple features. He loved Westerns and war movies. I liked everything equally. For me it was enough that the lights went out in the auditorium and things started to happen that were indubitably more important than real life. Besides, it was his treat, and he even bought the chocolate-covered peanuts. I never knew if he didn't like to go alone to the movies or if in reality he was deliberately planting the seeds of a vocation of which I was as yet unaware.

Nonetheless, that beloved uncle who escaped from reality with three movies a day, died one day, not like John Wayne or Robert Mitchum, but rather like a humble citizen of Buenos Aires called Ever de la Fuente. Later I think that things happened with greater rapidity, or that time was cut short, which is the sensation you have when you're growing up. There was an interim period, the beginning of adolescence, I suppose.

From that time I remember the movies as something useful, not because of the pictures I used to see, but rather because each Saturday night the parents of someone or other in the gang went to the movies and we had free run of the house to take Monica, a professional whore who gave us wholesale prices. Later I went with the old man to see *Ballad of a Soldier* five times, I think. Neither of us would confess that we cried like fools in the darkness of the theater. I never saw him cry, nor him me. But we both knew that we went to the movies to cry.

One day I got engaged to a girlfriend who was an intellectual. I was never sure whether I had fallen in love with her or with the books of Julio Cortázar that she read. I discovered the Lorraine Cinema (the leading art cinema house in Buenos Aires in the 60s). Some friends in the neighborhood never forgave me. Wajda, Kawalerowicz, the French New Wave, Godard and Truffaut. And that was that. Although I could walk out of the theater, I began to realize that I would never leave the movies. Love began. And everybody knows how complicated that can be.

© Eliseo Subiela

Translated by Miguel Pendas

Amos Vogel; curator, scholar

9 1/2 mm

When I turned five in Vienna, I received a beautiful laterna magica, a slide projector, just like Ingmar Bergman. The garish, deliciously painted images on the glass slides made me sit in front of a screen for the first time, my hungry eyes fixed upon it.

And then my father returned from his first trip to America and changed the course of my life by bringing with him a 9 1/2mm film camera, 9 1/2mm films he had bought or taken, and a 9 1/2mm film projector.

And so, in the protective darkness of my room, I discovered film. Charlie Chase . . . Felix the Cat . . . Charlie Chaplin . . . and the skyscrapers of New York.

And . . . cranking the projector by hand . . . I discovered . . . in a kind of holy terror . . . that I had the power . . . to speed up the action. Slow it down. Make it stop.

When we had to flee to Vienna in fear for our lives after Hitler took over Austria in 1938, my parents, knowing of my love for my projector and films, managed to squeeze them into our luggage. They then

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rested quietly in one of the many boxes in our apartment while we settled in and went on with our new lives. Finally, they were stored, with many other boxes, in our apartment house cellar, and disappeared in a subsequent flood, never to be seen again. But I had, in the meantime, gone on to Super-8, then 16mm, then 35mm, and, at the movies, watched Cinerama, Wide-Screen films, CinemaScope and, more recently, the 3D-IMAX productions.

Seeing New York in 3-D on a huge screen, I think back to my father's 9 1/2mm home movies of the New York skyline in 1938. There he is, my dear, long-departed father . . . on top of the Empire State Building . . . smiling . . . moving . . . pointing . . . ; the magic of the cinema. My cinema.

The magic of motion. And of stillness.

An endless dream opened before me, from which, to this day, I have not awakend.

© Amos Vogel

John Waters; filmmaker

I may have been a child when I first watched William Castle's *The Tingler*, but when the buzzers went off under the seats in my neighborhood movie theater, I suddenly knew there was such a thing as art in cinema.

© John Waters

John Woo; filmmmaker

When I was 11 years old I would draw images on broken glass with a Chinese brush. Then, hiding under a blanket, I would shine a flashlight behind it and project the image onto the wall. By moving the glass up and down and back and forth I could make the image move, and it almost looked like part of a movie.

My mother was a huge fan of American classics so she often took me to the movies. They were free for kids. Because we lived in the slums I loved movies for helping me escape from that hell. In them my dreams could come true, although at the time I never dreamed of working in the movies. I wanted to be a minister. I was raised and educated in the church. I had seen so many people suffering; I just wanted to help, like the church did. I wanted to send the message of God.

I started to learn painting, singing, dancing, writing, piano, and guitar. I was searching for the best instrument to express myself. I was good at everything, but didn't have the patience to learn each ability and instrument. Then I realized that I could do everything *in a movie*. Paint with the camera and art design. Use music to express feelings and emotions. And send a message through actors' performances and the story.

After high school my family couldn't afford to continue my education and Hong Kong didn't have a film school, so I stole film theory books from the library. Theories on editing. Theories on directing. Books on techniques. Hitchcock. Orson Welles. Eisenstein. Art books. Philosophy books. That is how I learned film theory and film as a spiritual art. I also learned about fimmaking from watching many, many movies. (At the time, Hong Kong distributed movies from all over the world.)

But it was hard to get a chance to work in films, so I began my career on stage. The reason I wanted to be an actor is that I was really shy. I could never create a beautiful well-phrased sentence. As a kid I had difficulty speaking—I stuttered and spoke slowly. In acting you train to speak fluently and to express your emotions. I also overcame my fear of meeting people. I was very active on stage. I acted and directed modern plays. I was a little star. When I was on stage I felt totally different. Girls liked me and liked my performance. I felt cool—like James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*.

Then I joined a group of young people who were crazy about movies. We all made experimental films. Two things finalized my decision to become a director. First, Hong Kong movies were really bad. They were poor-quality copycat films. I wanted to make films that looked good. The second inspiration was the French New Wave. The idea of a director as an auteur. It was revolutionary. The crews were smaller, like 20 people, with a single camera and small budgets and they made good movies. This encouraged me by showing that I didn't need a lot of money or a big crew to make a good movie. So I determined to be a film director. I was 20.

Movies are my main language. Movies act as a bridge which draws together everybody's heart. Through movies we learn about the beauty among us. I want to make movies to the end.

© John Woo

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Then I joined a group of young people who were crazy about movies. We all made experimental films. Two things finalized my decision to become a director. First, Hong Kong movies were really bad. They were poor-quality copycat films. I wanted to make films that looked good. The second inspiration was the French New Wave. The idea of a director as an auteur. It was revolutionary. The crews were smaller, like 20 people, with a single camera and small budgets and they made good movies. This encouraged me by showing that I didn't need a lot of money or a big crew to make a good movie. So I determined to be a film director. I was 20.

Movies are my main language. Movies act as a bridge which draws together everybody's heart. Through movies we learn about the beauty among us. I want to make movies to the end.

© John Woo

rested quietly in one of the many boxes in our apartment while we settled in and went on with our new lives. Finally, they were stored, with many other boxes, in our apartment house cellar, and disappeared in a subsequent flood, never to be seen again. But I had, in the meantime, gone on to Super-8, then 16mm, then 35mm, and, at the movies, watched Cinerama, Wide-Screen films, CinemaScope and, more recently, the 3D-IMAX productions.

Seeing New York in 3-D on a huge screen, I think back to my father's 9 1/2mm home movies of the New York skyline in 1938. There he is, my dear, long-departed father . . . on top of the Empire State Building . . . smiling . . . moving . . . pointing . . . ; the magic of the cinema. My cinema.

The magic of motion. And of stillness.

An endless dream opened before me, from which, to this day, I have not awakend.

© Amos Vogel

John Waters; filmmaker

I may have been a child when I first watched William Castle's *The Tingler*, but when the buzzers went off under the seats in my neighborhood movie theater, I suddenly knew there was such a thing as art in cinema.

© John Waters

John Woo; filmmmaker

When I was 11 years old I would draw images on broken glass with a Chinese brush. Then, hiding under a blanket, I would shine a flashlight behind it and project the image onto the wall. By moving the glass up and down and back and forth I could make the image move, and it almost looked like part of a movie.

My mother was a huge fan of American classics so she often took me to the movies. They were free for kids. Because we lived in the slums I loved movies for helping me escape from that hell. In them my dreams could come true, although at the time I never dreamed of working in the movies. I wanted to be a minister. I was raised and educated in the church. I had seen so many people suffering; I just wanted to help, like the church did. I wanted to send the message of God.

I started to learn painting, singing, dancing, writing, piano, and guitar. I was searching for the best instrument to express myself. I was good at everything, but didn't have the patience to learn each ability and instrument. Then I realized that I could do everything *in a movie*. Paint with the camera and art design. Use music to express feelings and emotions. And send a message through actors' performances and the story.

After high school my family couldn't afford to continue my education and Hong Kong didn't have a film school, so I stole film theory books from the library. Theories on editing. Theories on directing. Books on techniques. Hitchcock. Orson Welles. Eisenstein. Art books. Philosophy books. That is how I learned film theory and film as a spiritual art. I also learned about fimmaking from watching many, many movies. (At the time, Hong Kong distributed movies from all over the world.)

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Annual *Film Quarterly* Film Book Survey

PART II

Being Naked Playing Dead

The Art of Peter Greenaway

By Alan Woods. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997. $69.95 cloth; $24.95 paper.

The title of Alan Woods' book, *Being Naked Playing Dead: The Art of Peter Greenaway*, is likely to grab the attention of many people if for no other reason than they will wonder what being naked and dead have in common. Yet this strange title is extremely appropriate given that, when the reader finally gets to these topics, Woods make an argument of great relevance not only to the films of Peter Greenaway but also to a critique of dominant ways of thinking about vision and the body in contemporary film theory.

The book itself will strike many readers in a manner related to the way in which Greenaway's films strike them—as somewhat strange. Certainly as far as current academic film books go, the very organization is unusual. The book is divided into two parts: Part One consists of four major groupings, which in turn are subdivided into units, many of them brief. Although Woods calls these units chapters, they barely resemble the usual length or organization of chapters in scholarly books. The four major groupings are: "A Walk Through G: Some Organising Principles," "Theme and Variations," "Art Caught in the Act," and "Irony and Tragedy: Six Necessary Elements." The second grouping, "Theme and Variations," for example, is broken down into 14 "chapters" with such titles as "Repetition Time," "Water," "Applause," "Photography," and "Darwin, or the Misfortunes of Virtue." Several of the chapters are only three or four pages long and one is only one page long. The longest, on the other hand, is 19 pages. Part One of the book is approximately 170 pages. Part Two is entitled "Interviews," and consists of two extensive interviews Woods conducted with Greenaway and which Greenaway then revised. The interviews are approximately 80 pages long and reveal Greenaway to be an intelligent, insightful, and articulate filmmaker.

Woods is a lecturer in Historical and Theoretical Studies at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, University of Dundee, and the book seems very much like one written by an art historian rather than someone trained in film studies. Indeed, the subtitle of the book may be purposefully ambiguous in this regard. When Woods refers to the "Art of Peter Greenaway" he may be using the word "art" in its more literal sense: Greenaway, himself with a formal training in art, is an artist as well as a filmmaker. He has been involved in exhibitions and even staged an opera. It is also quite likely that Woods wants to invoke the notion of "high" as opposed to "popular" art in his description of Greenaway since, as we shall see, that distinction is a recurring theme in the book.

I suspect Woods would be the first to agree that his book is unconventional in its approach to its subject and that this in part results from his being an art historian, not a film theorist. With one exception, film theory is absent from the book. I mentioned above that one of the subdivisions of section two of the book is entitled "Repetition Time," a title which, not coincidentally, was used by Stephen Heath in a 1978 *Wide Angle* essay. It is almost startling to read a film book published in 1996 that makes no references to contemporary film theory (with the sole exception of Stephen Heath). Much new work has been done in the years since Heath was a prominent figure in the field. Furthermore, Heath himself has been (rightly or wrongly, and I think somewhat wrongly) either attacked or virtually ignored in film studies for nearly a decade.

When initially reading the book, one might conclude that Woods is simply not up on the field of film studies, though I will argue shortly that in a significant manner, he is ahead of the field. Woods relates Greenaway's use of repetition in his films to the use of repetition in such modern art

as that of Warhol and in the films of the "structuralist/materialist" filmmakers whom Heath admires so much. Yet Woods argues that whereas the modern tradition uses repetition to drain meaning from films, Greenaway's repetitions are "replete with meaning" (35). Woods is also interested in Heath's claim that all films are a "drama of vision." Woods extends this notion to Greenaway's films about narratives of blindness, not wanting to see, averted gazes, and voyeurism.

I think Woods is drawn to Heath for other reasons as well. Heath's work characterized an era that valorized the avant-garde (and a small portion of the avant-garde, at that) in opposition to dominant narrative cinema. The former was heralded for its alleged destruction of dominant ideological structures and the latter was deplored for its construction of the dominant ideology in the spectator.

Disappointingly, Woods seems to inherit this tradition 100 percent in his opposition between the films of Greenaway and those of Hollywood, which he denounces with absolute simplicity and certainty. Much as Heath championed the works of a few avant-garde filmmakers such as Michael Snow, Peter Gidal, and Malcolm LeGrice over the entire history of cinema, Woods similarly champions the films of Greenaway and a mere handful of other filmmakers as if they were the only truly intelligent, challenging filmmakers that required active, intelligent viewers, as opposed to all those other deplorable movies that mindless, passive spectators consume. Along with the handful of greats such as Eisenstein, Godard, and Frampton (all of whom, incidentally, are the filmmakers Greenaway himself admires), Greenaway is one of the select few. When Woods has to acknowledge that Derek Jarman, like Greenaway, is an artist who became a filmmaker, he glibly remarks, "I am myself so out of sympathy with the bulk of Jarman's work that if I attempted such a comparison it could only read, pointlessly, as a one-sided put-down of Jarman" (13). He feels no obligation to even hint as to why he is out of sympathy with this filmmaker who might bear comparison with the Master. Similarly, during a discussion of *The Baby of Mâcon*, when refering to Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*, a film Greenaway himself acknowledges, Woods finds it necessary to criticize Powell's film for a narrative that "creaks," a poor central performance, a use of "heavy-handed psychological motivation," and a simplistic characterization of psychologists as "mad" or "barmy" (156). Even if Woods took the trouble to develop and support these claims, which he doesn't, one would wonder what they contribute to the book. The sole purpose of these criticisms is to make clear that even when there are parallels between a conventional narrative film and a Greenaway film, one must recognize the deplorable limitations of the mainstream film in order to appreciate the genius of Greenaway's accomplishment.

Woods' denigration of the narrative cinema is unlikely to go over well with 90s film scholars. So is his elevation of Greenaway to the status of virtually unquestioned oppositional genius (only rarely does Woods question, qualify, or oppose anything Greenaway says). Nevertheless, at the center of this book lies an extremely vital, fresh, and challenging argument of central importance to much film theory. Just as Heath, for all the limitations of his theoretical position, was able to illuminate much about both the avant-garde and the classical cinema, so Woods is able to do the same for a central aspect of both Greenaway's films and those within dominant narrative traditions. And it is here that his art history background serves him well.

Woods observes, as most viewers of Greenaway's films would, that Greenaway's films have an excessive amount of nudity in them and that the use of such nudity is quite different from that of the classical narrative cinema. That much is nearly obvious, but Woods uses it as a starting point to relate Greenaway's films to nude traditions within art history that have been ignored by both filmmakers and film theorists alike. Implicitly, for he does not mention them by name, Woods here mounts a convincing attack on a feminist model of vision and power developed by such film theorists as Laura Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane. Along with art historian John Berger (who is in fact mentioned elsewhere in the book), Mulvey, Doane, and their followers adopted a model of vision which aligned vision with male power and placed women as objects of voyeurism within narrative space. This gender-specific account of vision and voyeurism always invoked power imbalances and always situated the axes of power along gender lines. While Woods acknowledges that this model is applicable to such Sharon Stone films as *Basic Instinct* and *Sliver*, he points out that there have been other profoundly important nude traditions within art history that have been ignored by Hollywood and that cannot be accounted for within this model of vision. He also reminds us that far from always being in a position of power, a person possessing the gaze can be linked to helplessness: "one can also be wounded by what one sees" (159).

Woods, like John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*, makes a distinction between nude and naked, and argues that Greenaway's films employ a form of nakedness far removed from the eroticism of sexual voyeurism and objectification. Indeed, such nakedness is linked to mortality and death. Greenaway's films are filled with images of naked corpses and one of them, *Death in the Seine*, is virtually about them. Furthermore, Woods argues that this nude tradition is addressed to both men and women and it represents both men and women. It is in that sense not gender-specific, though he makes a profound observation about male and female nudity in art history: "all those female nudes waiting for their men, all those male nudes waiting for their death" (149). To which I would simply add that there are instances in art history (e.g., Wiedner and Beckmann) of naked men who, instead of waiting for their death, already are dead.

Woods writes, "This is one way of defining the difference between the nude and the naked. The nude is a display of nakedness; the naked is witnessed nakedness" (149). Even societies in which women are publicly naked maintain a taboo on voyeurism and this distinction is important to Woods since he, in effect, argues that Greenaway's films are not voyeuristic in the usual sense of the word and that they present the viewer with naked bodies, not nude bodies. In this sense Greenaway is important in the way that Degas was when he represented women bathing in a manner linked

to the act of washing rather than displaying their nude bodies: "Degas gave women a reason to be naked distinct from being looked at by men, and the fact that men were looking at them immediately became problematic" (151). Thus, in discussing a scene from *The Belly of an Architect*, he notes, "The scene, in stark contrast to *Sliver* (and like a Degas pastel), offers no concessions to fantasies of voyeurism, fantasies in which the viewer is at once unseen, invisible, and *addressed*" (159). Elsewhere, Woods claims that Greenaway ignores the grammar of nudity in cinema and that in so doing restores a large repertoire of nonsexual meanings to the nude, meanings which are not tied to ideal notions of perfect beauty and what he calls the "twentieth century sense of shame involved in any nudity not arbitrarily defined as perfect" (163).

This provocative thesis is linked to an equally interesting account of differing kinds of narrative space, including what Woods called witnessed space and theatrical space. Both Greenaway and Woods share the conviction that the history of cinema is largely a history of the image being subordinate to literature, narrative, and the word. One of Greenaway's solutions to this problem has been to increasingly use the word *in* the image, thus reconfiguring the word/image relationship. This practice is central to *The Pillow Book*, the film Greenaway was editing when Woods was conducting his second interview with the filmmaker.

Woods convincingly argues that "images and stagings of sex and death, [are] the most telling and acute occasions of Greenaway's explorations of the limits of representation" (140). Positing Greenaway as a filmmaker who explores the limits of representation also has a familiar ring to those aware of Stephen Heath's analysis of structuralist/materialist cinema. And Woods demonstrates that Greenaway is, in fact, a filmmaker of such ambition.

As its title suggests, in some ways this is a book about the representation of the body: "Our interest in the nude, he [Greenaway] suggests is more than sexual: it is also to do with our knowledge of our own mortality. Many of the bodies he shows us are dead, or at least . . . *acting* dead" (162). Since these are not sexual bodies on display, they can and do depart from the usual cultural standards of beauty. Yet there are several troubling aspects of this account of Greenaway's work about which Woods says little or nothing. In discussing a remark by a character in *The Baby of Mâcon*, Woods observes, "In an echo of Spica's mockery of his gang's 'shrivelled contributions' in the first scene of *The Cook* . . . (compare also Cissie 1's question in *Drowning by Numbers*, 'Do all fat men have small penises?'), she derides the young soldier/actor's penis" (167). Yet, it is not clear to me how this conventional mockery of masculinity by these characters in the film avoids recapitulating precisely those cultural sexual ideals which Woods elsewhere claims Greenaway does avoid. After the woman asks the question in *Drowning by Numbers*, the fat man in question rolls over in his sleep, revealing his small penis. Something similar happens in *The Pillow Book*. A woman rips a towel from a fat man and looking at his genitals makes a contemptuous remark to the effect that they say Americans have nothing to hide and now she can see that is true. The fat man then lies on his back and, as in *Drowning by Numbers*, the small penis is once again prominently displayed.

The dialogue in these films brings special attention to the representation of the penis and specifically to the *shame* that men with small penises may experience. If Greenaway is here challenging dominant cultural notions of the body and our twentieth-century sense of shame about not being perfect, Woods in no way indicates how he is doing it—a serious flaw in this immensely valuable section of the book.

Finally, I conclude with another reservation. Woods makes the case for linking nakedness to death in Greenaway's films as opposed to the usual cinematic nudity which is linked to eroticism. Yet he avoids discussing whether this distinction is as clearcut as it seems. Certainly death and eroticism may be intimately intertwined. The body naked in death is not necessarily a body removed from eroticism, as Greenaway's shots of such bodies in *Death in the Seine*, perhaps inadvertently, show. Woods' analysis would be even stronger had he explored that connection. Nevertheless, this book has a very important argument about narrative, vision, and the representation of the body at its center and I highly recommend it for all those interested in the intersection of these subjects as well as in Greenaway's films.

Peter Lehman is Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Media Arts at the University of Arizona. He is the author of *Running Scared: Masculinity and the Representation of the Male Body* and editor of *Defining Cinema*.

Black Film/White Money

By Jesse Algernon Rhines. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996. $48.00 cloth; $17.95 paper.

Current estimates place African-American moviegoers at anywhere from 25 to 30 percent of the paying domestic film audience; their sparse presence as workers in the film industry is shocking by comparison. Jesse Rhines begins his book with this imbalance, and develops a multifaceted look at African Americans and the contemporary film industry—but his examination, while enlightening in many respects, is disappointing in many others.

There are a number of valuable insights scattered through *Black Film/White Money*. Rhines, an editor at *Cineaste* and a professor of political economy at Rutgers University, has written useful histories of independent distributing co-ops and firms, such as Reginald Hudlin's Black Filmmaker Foundation or KJM3's philosophy and marketing of Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust*. He points out how the major studios eventually co-opt major black talents, steering their work to greater crossover appeal.

One of the book's strongest chapters provides an up-to-date discussion of Hollywood's discriminatory hiring practices against African Americans at all levels (union, creative, executive)—Rhines observes that the black film renaissance since *She's Gotta Have It* (1986) has made a big difference, having increased black employment from 160 to

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485 jobs per year. Yet another chapter considers the ways more African Americans could gain training on professional film shoots: Rhines endorses Warrington Hudlin's internship approach—Hudlin received $50,000 from Paramount to hire 12 black interns —over public arts programs.

Black Film/White Money is enlivened by personal interviews with directors and other black filmmaking activists, organizers, fundraisers, etc., and the photos (many including the author) give the book a personal touch.

Particularly fascinating are the comments of Janet Grillo, an acquisitions executive at New Line Cinema (producer/distributor of the *House Party* films, *Hangin' with the Homeboys*, etc.), who talks about the necessity of marketing films for the broadest appeal, and who points out that, regardless of race or gender, to get a film made one must have a major star attached or assemble a zero-budget independent film.

But otherwise I found Black *Film/White Money* the most disappointing of the recent books on African Americans in film. If you've read previous studies by Thomas Cripps, Donald Bogle, or Ed Guerrero, you will learn nothing new from Rhines' rehashing of their and others' scholarship over four chapters and 50 pages. The 1920s chapter in particular has a number of factual errors and one of interpretation. Though Rhines, and his interviewees, like Grillo, often remind us that the bottom line in industry conduct is making money, Rhines more often points to racism pure and simple to explain what he describes.

Rhines offers as an example a simplistic comparison: in the early 1920s, Universal Pictures compelled black actor Noble Johnson to give up work for his race company (Lincoln), but founder Carl Laemmle offered free studio facilities to white producer (and competitor) Thomas Ince. In this case, business policy is an equally compelling explanation of these two events—it is questionable whether Laemmle even knew of his corporation's ultimatum to Noble Johnson, and for all we know, his generosity may have been offered with the hope that Ince would work for him someday. Rhines has other, more compelling examples of industry racism elsewhere in the book.

Obviously, the history of African-American filmmaking is not Rhines' primary interest (even if it occupies one-quarter of his book). But I often was troubled by his discussion of the contemporary industry. As he lays out the producing, distributing, and exhibiting branches of the industry, Rhines correctly emphasizes the importance of distribution in the balance of power; but he doesn't inspire a more general sense of confidence in his analyses when he writes that the ruthless distributor "does not care if the profit comes from the movie or from the popcorn sold at the theater" (9). Popcorn profits of course belong solely to the exhibitor and the house "nut"—the distributor has no share in them, unless the distributor owns the theater.

Or later, in his conclusion, Rhines will remind us that *Daughters of the Dust* (1991) was a women's "feeling" film about female bonding and not a ghetto action film like *Boyz N the Hood* (also 1991), and that consequently no studio would pick it up and it fared poorly at the box office. But it seems equally pertinent that *Daughters of the Dust* is one of the most *difficult* films this side of Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* to understand on a basic story level in one viewing, and that Hollywood studios never handle such films regardless of who has made them. Racism and sexism are certainly factors in how Hollywood conducts itself, but they are often more subtle, and act in combination with other factors more often than Rhines allows (the mismarketing and fate of Charles Burnett's *To Sleep with Anger* [1990] seems a much better example in this regard).

I suspect that the most discussed chapter in *Black Film/White Money* will be Rhines' study of Spike Lee, the one place where political economy meets critical analysis head-on. Here Rhines argues that contemporary black filmmakers like Lee would make better films than *Do the Right Thing* (1989) if they studied the current debates in sociological circles about the myriad forces that create the black urban underclass and analyzed them in their scripts. Although I was intrigued by Rhines' analysis of Lee's star image as Mars Blackmon and his consequent affiliation with the black urban lower class, I found his argument unpersuasive.

Rhines reasons that Lee's films have been celebrated most frequently (at least in the white-dominated media) as depictions of and commentaries on sociological issues rather than as artistic works. Given this spin, and given the power of film to disseminate ideas, Rhines argues, Lee should be dramatizing and analyzing more forthrightly the systematic concentration of disadvantages (segregated housing, poor education, and scarce financial resources) that the black urban underclass faces, rather than showing racism as the "irrational, individual pathology" of pizzeria owner Sal (125). Along the same lines, Rhines writes that *She's Gotta Have It* should tell us why Mars Blackmon is unemployed and how he can afford his bicycle, his sneakers, etc.; instead, Mars confirms the neo-conservative claim that black poverty derives from lack of self-discipline (123). Rhines mounts a similar critique against *Jungle Fever*'s (1991) depiction of Gator Purify's drug addiction—and the only solution the film offers: death. These films end up in "unintended collusion" with the capitalist and racist structures of society by encouraging the audience to blame social life on individuals.

Lee does not take a more sociologically informed tack, Rhines asserts, because he is an artist: through personal interviews with Lee, Rhines documents (and repeats) that "Lee's approach to the underclass is that of the artist intent on expressing his feeling rather than the scholar intending to explicate social phenomena" (112). Rhines finds this appalling. Lee has never taken sociology nor read the most important recent studies, like those of William Julius Wilson (though Lee has read the work of W.E.B. DuBois):

> Lee's films do not explain the underlying economic structure of the racial domination they depict. The first step towards remedying the situation is a full explanation and articulation of this structure. In *Do the Right Thing*, for example, Spike Lee does not show the boarded-up factories all over Brooklyn in which Blacks once worked for

> high, union wages. He never explains why Mookie works in a low-paying pizza parlor rather than in a unionized factory (134). . . . Lee never says these things, and unless he studies the issues he will never be able to raise mass consciousness of them (135).

The strident tone of Rhines' prescriptions for Lee is typical of the chapter and it encourages a strident response: Whose films should Spike Lee make? His own, those dictated by the white media and political economists, or Rhines'? By the end of the chapter, I felt Lee could satisfy Rhines only by getting a degree in sociology—something his schedule clearly doesn't allow.

Of course, the number of filmmakers who studied sociology can be counted on one hand; and they are probably making documentaries, if they have been producing anything. But Rhines doesn't discuss potential positive examples—Michael Moore of *Roger and Me* (1989), the trio who made *Hoop Dreams* (1995), John Singleton of *Boyz N the Hood*, the Hughes brothers and *Menace II Society* (1993), all of whom could be said to struggle, with varied success, to dramatize the impersonal forces that shape and constrain ordinary peoples' lives. Instead, Rhines quotes Reginald Hudlin against Lee to the effect that filmmakers, like anyone else, should try to make the world a better place. This is hopeful and encouraging, but lacks specifics. Where do *House Party* (1990) or *Boomerang* (1992) fit here?

Most people would agree in principle that any filmmakers who portray contemporary black life and race relations should do so with considerable care, and not just because of the way audiences or the media might spin their work. But film history, and even the history of the social problem film, from *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932) to *Dead Man Walking* (1995), indicates that balancing analysis of the social institutions and structures with dramatic narrative that intrigues an audience is perhaps the greatest challenge facing artists with a social bent. Then too, Rhines repeatedly notes how the media treat Lee as an authority on race relations, whereas Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen are not dragged onto the talk shows when Italian Americans or Jewish Americans are in the news. This is striking until you recognize that Scorsese and Allen do not make remotely "message" movies; Oliver Stone, however, does, and he has been a staple of the talk show and news circuits.

Extending Rhines' logic momentarily—that you must shape your art entirely to what your audience does with it—we might argue that Rhines should have taken courses in film studies in order to strengthen his own analyses. Perhaps he would not then castigate the filmmakers without reference to film history and reduce a wide variety of films to pithy moral statements (as he does in enumerating the "meanings" in independent films: "female independence in thought and action is good"; "cross-class unity among Blacks aimed at improving conditions for all blacks should be encouraged; African America continues to be oppressed by white America" [59-60]). Assuming that a film's meanings can be pinned down so neatly leaves little room for ambiguity, ambivalence, communities of interpretation—in short, many of the textual features that have enhanced viewers' experience of *Do the Right Thing* (from Rosie Perez's opening boxing/dance to Mookie's contradictory behavior—he is employed but does his job laconically). Shouldn't *viewers* read Wilson's book and see where Lee's films allude to the processes and structures Wilson dissects? Does the filmmaker have to do everything?

Rhines is not the first to answer yes. But he has not presented his case well, and that, along with the other flaws in *Black Film/White Money*, makes the book a very uneven read. One can and should take the strengths of this book to heart; but one can and should also regard many of its presuppositions, inferences, and arguments warily.

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City of Dreams

The Making and Remaking of Universal Pictures

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This 250-page book is a studio history, the story of one of the oldest and surely most important of Hollywood companies. Bernard Dick, Director of the School of Communication Arts at Fairleigh Dickinson University's Teaneck campus, surveyed the rise of Columbia Pictures for the same press in 1993, and does a similar job here. Instead of Columbia's driving force, Harry Cohn, the hero of this profile is Carl Laemmle, and after a chapter seeking relevance today, Dick lovingly follows "Uncle Carl" from New Jersey to Southern California to the building of the Universal City studio. Uncle Carl ran his moviemaking complex until the coming of sound, then turned it over to his son, who was forced out in the middle 1930s. This rise—and fall—stands at the heart of *City of Dreams*.

Like many, Dick was inspired to studio-driven analysis by seeing a remarkable film—in this case Universal's *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*—seen in his native Scranton, Pennsylvania. This dovetails into the "special emphasis" (ix) Dick allocates to the Universal films of the 1930s, and spills over into the description and evaluation of more Universal favorites released during the 1940s. In sum, Dick's method is to start with feature films (he largely ignores other studio products) and then to work to understand their production.

To accomplish this, Dick writes corporate history as family history, and admits he wanted to pen a narrative without source notes, but felt compelled to add them. Halfway through the book, the Laemmle era is completed, and after Dick has had his day with the Universal films of the 1940s that he saw at the Capitol, State, and West Side theaters, he almost begrudgingly appends single modest chapters on Universal's International era, the Lew Wasserman period,

> high, union wages. He never explains why Mookie works in a low-paying pizza parlor rather than in a unionized factory (134). . . . Lee never says these things, and unless he studies the issues he will never be able to raise mass consciousness of them (135).

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the controversial sale to Matsushita of Japan, and the even more disturbing sale again to Seagrams of Canada and another junior trying to outdo his father, this time liquor billionaire Edgar Bronfman, Jr.

To illustrate his movie book, Dick has collected four sets of black-and white stills, shots of the changing studio lot, photographs of noted stars and production chiefs, and publicity images from some of Universal's most famous feature films. Like sets of illustrated materials found in all too many books about the movies since 1950, recent works in color—here centrally *Jaws* and *E.T.:The Extra-Terrestrial*—are, sadly, reproduced in black-and-white.

The notes indicate Dick's sources were principally books, trade papers such as *Variety*, *Moving Picture World*, and *Motion Picture News*, fan magazines such as *Photoplay*, and newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Dick concedes that "there is no complete Universal archive," only scattered incomplete records for some films made between 1930 and 1960 (236). Dick, who regularly falls back to the most easily accessible public record, has structured a historical text by availability of materials. This provides a serious flaw in an otherwise good survey.

Because of the absence of an easy entree to data, the Lew Wasserman era of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s is covered in but a page a year. But this MCA period, not the Laemmle era, ought to provide the core decades for Universal; this is the period when the studio stood at the very peak of Hollywood power, influence, and innovation. Dick is right that information on Lew Wasserman and company is hard to get, but, again, data access and availability ought not dictate the structure of the historical analysis and argument.

Simply put, Lew Wasserman pioneered the modern media conglomerate and, during the 1960s and 1970s and into the 1980s, led Hollywood to power and influence far surpassing any earlier period. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, the shadowy Wasserman entered the movie business indirectly, as a booker of bands for the Music Corporation of America. It was during the crest of the big band era that Wasserman was sent to Hollywood to book bands into the movies. He never left, and Hollywood would never be the same again. By 1936 he had risen to become MCA's national director of publicity. By 1938 he emerged as the favored vice president.

As Bernard Dick notes, Wasserman—with heralded clients Jimmy Stewart and Alfred Hitchcock—led the movement to independent film production and the creation of percentage package deals. Wasserman also led the Hollywood studios into the creation of movies made for television, and by the late 1960s turned what had been an ailing studio into the leading modern media conglomerate, paving the way for the Time Warners, the Disneys, and the Rupert Murdochs. In short, Lew Wasserman created the modern movie conglomerate by shrugging off MCA's original talent business and making Hollywood the world center of television production, theme parks, and popular music production. He revived vertical integration in 1986 by buying the Cineplex Odeon theater chain. His modern office tower adjacent to the studio lot symbolized the modern post-television Hollywood.

This former agent turned studio chief was able to attract quality talent to his new empire: Alfred Hitchcock moved to Universal; the studio's *To Kill a Mockingbird* won the best actor Oscar for Gregory Peck. So much television production commenced that through the Wasserman era, Universal became the busiest lot in Hollywood, churning out such dramatic fare as "Colombo," "The Six-Million Dollar Man," and "Kojak." During the 1970s, Universal led the way with miniseries and made-for-TV movies. With its release of *Jaws* in 1975, Universal initiated an era of blockbuster feature films and forever altered the Hollywood landscape. Universal's *E. T.* brought the company revenues that needed to be measured in the billions of dollars.

No flashy "Hollywood type," Lew Wasserman—and all his assistants—wore plain dark suits, and white shirts, looking more like IBM salesmen than hip production barons. Like his mentor, Jules Stein, Lew Wasserman aggressively shunned all forms of personal publicity, and labored anonymously to continually outdo the competition. No one doubted that as a negotiator Wasserman had no equal; he earned a reputation as the face not wanted across the table. All this has made the historians job very difficult; Wasserman has made it clear he wishes no publicity.

Dick had to await the selling of the company to bring Wasserman out into the light. Thus Dick allocates more pages in his studio history to the sale of the empire that Wasserman built than to its development and operations during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. *City of Dreams* ends on a sad note as the Wasserman empire unravels, and through the 1990s Universal has stood at its lowest ebb since the days of Laemmle's inabilities to make a go of the movie business with the coming of sound and the Great Depression. This studio history should have ended with the bowing out of Lew Wasserman, leaving to later historians the task of analyzing the corporation's fate as part of one of the world's largest liquor companies.

Douglas Gomery teaches in the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Contesting Tears

The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman

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I undertook this review as a challenge to myself. I have resisted reading Cavell closely partly because scanning revealed that he was not reading the work of feminist scholars interested in the same films as he, but also because I saw that his concerns were far from my own. I followed with interest the *Critical Inquiry* interchange with Tania Modleski, and was disposed to support Modleski's objection to Cavell's seeing no need to read feminists on films he was studying.

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However, approached to review *Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman*, I thought it

time that I found out for myself how Cavell thinks and what I could learn from him. Feminists, after all, may be as guilty of not reading Cavell as vice versa. As will be clear in what follows, it has been an interesting but sometimes frustrating journey into Cavell's mind. Without doubt, this is a broad, deep, and original mind: Cavell is the author of approximately eleven books dating back to 1958, and many articles as well. In this latest volume, Cavell interestingly constructs a film genre out of another genre: he posits that a genre with characteristics opposite to that of the remarriage comedy he studied earlier needs to exist; he proceeds to find it, and name it the melodrama of the "Unknown Woman."

The concept of this Unknown Woman, however, is complex, and it is not always easy to follow Cavell's thinking. It was only when I reached the concluding essay on King Vidor's *Stella Dallas* that I realized the book might partly be an intensely personal quest which we are invited to look in on, and, if we can, share. In light of Cavell's extraordinary reading of *Stella Dallas*, it's possible that his mother was the inspiration for his concept of the Unknown Woman. Cavell's interest in melodrama may come from his search for his mother's gaze; or from what he describes as his subjection to her moods and her music; or from identification with her struggle to find her own voice, her own language that would entail the transformation that interests Cavell in the melodrama heroines he studies.

But this is to anticipate. I'll divide my comments into three parts and then return to *Stella Dallas* in concluding: First, frustrations, for which I share part of the blame; second, Cavell's anxieties, which at times disrupt the argument; and last but not least, the importance of Cavell's insights into Hollywood melodrama.

1. Frustrations

Part of my frustration in reading this volume arises from my never quite understanding how philosophers go about intellectual projects. The kinds of question even Continental philosophers like Cavell ask always seem to me impossibly abstract, if not quite simply *impossible.* From my labored reading of this book, I conclude that it is not so much an issue between feminists and Cavell as between disciplinary training of philosophers and of film scholars. I had difficulty finding the main point of many a discussion. There are long digressions into philosophical concepts; other digressions in which Cavell discusses his earlier work; discourses on the relationship of psychoanalysis to philosophy that do not seem to bear on the reading in hand, and so on. In all of this, as I show below, I found some intriguing insights, but rarely did I feel I had gained more insight into a particular film. Film is apparently used as a vehicle for philosophical meditations, while film scholars aim for understanding a film in relation to its culture, its history, its mode of production, its institutional and national bases, its ideologies, etc.

Another linked frustration is that this is not really a book, but a collection of essays, most of which have already been published, brought together under one cover. While the title sounds as if there would be a continuous argument about the melodrama of the Unknown Woman, in fact differing topics are taken up in each essay, making the overall project of the book difficult to see.

A further complication is that Cavell brings to his readings of Hollywood films a huge wealth of learning in a range of disciplines from literature and philosophy to psychoanalysis and art. The wealth of references can be overwhelming, may seem at first extravagant (as in the discourse on the *Genesis* story of Adam and Eve in the introduction and elsewhere in the book). In this situation, there is inevitably not only repetition between essays, but circularity. The same points return in different guises: references to Ibsen's Nora, to Shakespeare plays, to Emerson and Thoreau, and to the *Genesis* story recur as if they have not been mentioned before and in relation to different arguments. Only gradually may a reader begin to grasp the continuing motifs behind these references, especially vis-à-vis *A Doll's House*, Emerson, and Thoreau.

2. Anxieties

Three anxieties interrupted the flow of the text in many places. Especially in the introduction, I sensed first what I will call an "anxiety of time," evidenced in Cavell's many references to the long time that he has been doing this work; second, an "anxiety of gender," in that Cavell finally worries about his inattention to feminist studies of melodrama; and third, an "anxiety of discipline," in that Cavell has a need to defend his foray as a *philosopher* into film.

Let me say a word about each of these.

i. *Anxiety of time.* At this point in his life, Cavell is in a continuous discussion with himself and his earlier work. The references back to prior books and statements at times become irritating, if not lending a perhaps unintended but still self-aggrandizing tone to sections of the book. Much of the introduction rehearses arguments made in Cavell's *Pursuit of Happiness* or his essay on *Genesis.* I felt as if I were coming in on a conversation I *ought* to have already been in on; and if I wasn't, I somehow wasn't a welcome guest at this table. On the positive side, these tracings back to earlier work give us a sense of urgency about the project—of its having indeed grown out of earlier ideas in a manner of an organic entity. The anxiety of time emerges in a different way in Cavell's need to lay claim to the authority that comes from doing research for so long. Perhaps there is anxiety about running out of time to complete his projects. I don't know, but this anxiety may account for Cavell's turning increasingly toward autobiography.[1]

ii. *Anxiety of gender.* This emerges in Cavell's addressing his lack of reference to what he calls "the complexities of feminist issues in film" (31). While I now see the logic of Cavell's points, his excuse for not paying attention to feminist melodrama work because not "specifically invited to" still strikes me as disingenuous. Cavell evidently only engages with research that is in line with his own thoughts: *he sees no need to take other points of view into account.*[2] At the outset of his interest in melodrama, Cavell might properly have said some of the things he gets to say here—namely that as a philosopher, he sees his task in relation to philosophy's "right or claim to its arrogations

of voice in matters it takes as of universal or necessary interest" (31).[3]

In other words (and Cavell's style often obfuscates his points, as in the above awkward sentence), it seems that because melodrama arguments had a specifically *feminist* standpoint, Cavell avoided taking them into account. (Is he saying that such a standpoint could not be "universal"? It's a bit unclear.) At first, I thought a literal matter of gender identification was the problem, since Cavell goes on to tell us why he could respond to feminist arguments about *Stella Dallas* (1937 version): The "invitation" came because he saw as the main subject of that film "the extent to which a male voice can be listened to." But this point is confusing because in fact I find Cavell extraordinarily identified with feminine points of view. It's possible that his explanation is meant to hide the actual similarity of points feminists have made, such as, for instance in the essay on *Now Voyager*, Cavell's associating "a lingering villainy with the fact of maleness itself—as maleness, or rather masculinity, has been defined, or deformed, in our culture" (116-17); or his reading of the mother-daughter relationship as a conflict of power (120).[4]

iii. *Anxiety of discipline.* Finally, and linked to the anxiety of gender, is the specificity of worries about a philosopher being "accepted by" or even "read by" film scholars. While Cavell claims he did not expect his first 1971 film book to be read by film scholars, he immediately suggests that he was puzzled, perhaps even hurt, by the neglect: he is grateful for Dudley Andrew's later "explanation" that film studies was in its formative stages in 1971. Cavell further notes how his expectation of a hidden "hostility" was confirmed with Tania Modleski's letter to *Critical Inquiry* on the publication of his original essay on *Now Voyager*.

3. Insights

Later on, toward the end of chapter 1, Cavell deals less defensively with why, as a philosopher, he turned to film. His argument is compelling, even if, characteristically, he introduces the point almost as an afterthought.[5] Cavell is talking about *Gaslight* and the heroine's madness, which he links briefly to an autobiographical moment by Derrida in an early essay on Michel Foucault. He goes on: "It was the conjunction of film with madness, skepticism, and the cogito that prompted my earlier citing of Derrida's review of Foucault. Articulating this conjunction of themes forms one sort of response to a question repeatedly directed to me . . . What is film that it invites you to discuss philosophical issues of this kind?" (62). After a long digression into the difference between Cavell's and Derrida's ideas of philosophy (each representing, respectively, America and Europe), Cavell argues, in a way that I found quite compelling given my own background in American thought and literature, that it is the absence of the edifice of philosophy in America—an edifice that is assumed in Europe—that has allowed film to play a different role in American culture from the one that it plays in other cultures.

Cavell is arguing, essentially, that the same kind of difference as scholars have agreed upon between American

and European literature can be found between American and European film: namely, that American film "participates in this Western cultural ambition of self-thought or self-invention that presents itself in the absence of the Western edifice of philosophy, so that on these shores film has the following peculiar economy: it has the space and the cultural pressure to satisfy the craving for thought, the ambition of a talented culture to examine itself publicly" (7). For these reasons, Cavell feels justified in linking Emerson's and Thoreau's ideas to those in Hollywood melodrama. But if, as Cavell seems to agree, the American public does not recognize the role that film is playing, is film in fact *playing this role*? I suppose film is playing this role at least for Cavell, justifying his using Hollywood films to the American philosophical ends he puts them in his book.

Cavell's long digression into the "concept of the ordinary" (88–90) is an example of his going to unnecessary lengths—such as detailing his "debts in philosophy," his arguments in his first philosophical essay in 1958 and later philosophical books—to arrive at some other points I found provocative, namely that 1) the movement toward literary romanticism is fuelled by the effort to overcome skepticism; 2) that skepticism seems to be "a male business"; 3) that both psychoanalysis and cinema seem to be asking of the woman, "How is it that you escape doubt? What certainty enclosed you, whatever your other insecurities, from just this torture?" (101). Without directly answering any of these questions—or indeed really following them through clearly—Cavell then declares that it is because the skeptic denies that the human body is expressive of mind that he (sic) can deny the existence of other minds. For "proof of human existence," Cavell turns to Garbo and to what he calls "the perfection of the motion picture camera" as alone able to provide this "proof."

What is really going on here? First, is this yet another version of men sensing an inadequacy in their world trying to find what they lack in woman, like Lacan's attribution of an envied "jouissance" to woman, or of so-called male "womb envy"? Is Cavell's attribution of a lack of skepticism to women yet another effort to find a place where what is denied males can *be*? I don't know the answer, but passages like this reveal the very different ways in which philosophers and film scholars relate to film characters, and to the phenomenon of cinema itself. Cavell treats characters as if they were rounded existing people whom Cavell might know in real life; film scholars—especially feminists—have rather been interested in understanding the characters as constructions of a particular historical era and as bearing the burden of prevailing discourses of that era. This makes all the difference in the world to what any analysis produces.

4. *Stella Dallas*

I believe Cavell's analysis of King Vidor's *Stella Dallas* finally offers the key to the form of his particular analyses of melodrama. I also believe that attending to feminist readings with which he disagrees permitted Cavell to locate his very personal relation to the melodrama of the Unknown Woman.

In his analysis of *Stella Dallas*, then, Cavell does take some feminist arguments into account. Confronting and differing from feminist analyses enabled Cavell to expand upon earlier unexplored notions of melodrama and the mother's gaze (as in his discussion of *Now Voyager*), allowing him perhaps unconsciously to reveal links between his interest in melodrama and his identification with, and isolation from, his own mother that may have been there from the beginning.[6] In discussing whether or not the ending of *Stella Dallas* is ecstasy or mourning, Cavell recalls his mother's moods as he would find them as a child on returning home from school. The scene describes shows a little boy isolated from his mother as she plays the piano, thinking he knows not what.

Reading back from this, one can see how Cavell's personal search lead to his remarkable sensitivity to the mother-daughter relationship in the film, as also to the desires of Stella herself. The essay begins with another "moment of autobiography," namely the reference to his mother's asking of Cavell and his father, about a particular outfit, "Too Stella Dallas?" (200). This leads fittingly into Cavell's reversal of many feminist readings, including my own, that regret Stella's allowing herself to be relegated out of Laurel's life, and inserting her in her father's upper-class world—this apparently because of her inability to unlearn her "taste" for inappropriate clothes and friends. Cavell makes the case for Stella's deliberately intending to turn Laurel away from her: he argues that she was fully conscious of the various spectacles she made of herself and could have avoided them had she so chosen. (While for the most part convincing, Cavell's account does not explain Stella's apparent surprise in hearing Laurel's friends joke about her crazy clothes: if she had planned it, why would she appear surprised?) However, the argument leads Cavell to suggest that Stella (like his mother) was trying to find herself by deliberately "losing" Laurel (Cavell). Forcing Laurel away was for the purposes of self-fulfillment, transformation. However, we are not privy to what Stella was marching toward from the screen/scene of Laurel's wedding! Nor can Cavell tell us. However, we do know that he links the woman's isolation with her need for transcendence (see p. 37).

It's now that Cavell at first mysteriously confuses Stella and Stanwyck (as he earlier had Charlotte and Bette Davis), and says that we know Stanwyck was going on to be "a star." This makes little sense until Cavell talks of his mother's "relation to a certain stardom, and her refusal of the chance for more" (222). One now better understands his interest in melodramas in which the woman is "transformed" and finds her "stardom," as he claims happens in both *Stella Dallas* and *Now Voyager*. Cavell continues to say that "these are pertinent matters" and that "They must concern the relation between searching for the mother's gaze and being subjected to her moods."

At this point, I finally understood Cavell's earlier statement about his interest in *Stella Dallas* as being "the extent to which a male voice can be listened to," and also why the scene of Nora leaving the "doll's house" keeps on recurring. The recurrence now seems to me semi-traumatic in its

"flashback" quality, and it may refer to a personal event in Cavell's life.[7] Did Cavell's mother not listen to the male voice, I wonder? As Cavell concludes: "Music, moods, abandonment, subjection, dispossession—of course; we are speaking of melodrama" (222).

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Notes

1. Is this inevitable as a scholar ages? What really lies behind it? It's an interesting question that I'll be pondering in my own future work. It's perhaps that, in sensing the limit of time as one ages, one wants to confront or commemorate the self before it is too late. One wants the Other to know who one is, what one has been, perhaps.
2. As a humanist, I found this odd: humanities scholars see research as collaborative in the sense of trying to build upon (even if in the process critiquing or diverging from) prior work. But, as noted earlier, feminists themselves may not have lived up to this demand in not attending to Cavell's work on melodrama. Much depends on who first began in-depth study of the films we all share in common. Cavell at times claims to have delivered essays as lectures before feminists published their research. But my essay on *Stella Dallas* came out in 1983, and Linda Williams' response in 1984; my *Women in Film: Both Sides of the Camera* also in 1983; Laura Mulvey's essays on Sirk and melodrama appeared in even earlier, in 1977 and 1982. It would seem that at least some of Cavell's insights are similar to those of feminists. So why the reticence in 1990 to honor those debts? Why only the belated attention to feminists on *Stella Dallas*?
3. Let me just note that, like Modleski, I object to Cavell's statement that feminist film scholars "condescend" to Hollywood! I think feminists—especially those studying melodrama—have great respect for Hollywood. If they critique the priority given to the male voice, this is not to be confused with condescension. Cavell is mistaken in attributing scorn for melodrama in feminists' *critique* of gender assumptions in some films, But I will return to this later on.
4. In revising the essay for inclusion in this volume, Cavell does attend explicitly at least to Laura Mulvey's theory of the three "looks" in cinema, one of which, in Cavell's words, "subject(s) women to the appropriative, unreciprocated gaze of men" (123). Some of Cavell's following objections to the theory are interesting, although they reveal again the differing concerns of feminists and philosophers.
5. One of the problems with the way Cavell thinks is, for me, his permitting a sort of association of ideas to control his discourse. This seems a departure from what I take to be philosophical thinking—the intense burrowing away at an abstract concept.
6. As Cavell puts it in the *Now Voyager* essay: "The irony that negates the conversation of the pair in remarriage comedy, the thing that takes the place of their wicked joy in exchanging words, hence in foregoing words, serves to isolate the woman of this melodrama from everyone around her, or almost everyone. It is a question whether it also isolated her from us. Hence I speak of the genre as the study of the unknownness of the woman" (117). In the introduction, we find the core of Cavell's thesis, namely: "The woman's isolation is associated in the films of unknownness with some register of her relation to the transcendent" (37).
7. For more on the phenomena of the traumatic flashback, see Cathy Caruth, ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

Hollywood's High Noon

Moviemaking and Society Before Television

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To this examination of American cinema, Thomas Cripps brings the careful scholarship and breadth of understanding that characterized two previous volumes, *Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film, 1900-1942* and *Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era.* This new book, in fact, incorporates Cripps' research on African-American filmmaking into a history of American cinema, thus providing the first fully integrated survey of the field. *Hollywood's High Noon* is part of a series ("The American Moment," which includes volumes on sports, the Cold War, the Supreme Court, and the debate over Vietnam) addressed to a non-specialist academic audience. Cripps accordingly offers a short (and derivative) opening chapter on early cinema before turning to the period between 1920 and 1948 when "Hollywood was HOLLYWOOD," as he styles it. Refreshingly, he rejects the anecdotal material that still features largely in cinema histories for non-specialist readers, and seldom discusses specific movies or directors in any detail. He instead offers brief summaries of work done by recent historians, as well as a shrewd appraisal of film historiography. Cripps is openly critical of some recent theories, condemning the notion that Hollywood was "a monolithic state apparatus" that allowed for little negotiation among competing interests. He also mistrusts the popular argument that genres were "palliatives designed to induce acceptance rather than action," suggesting instead that some slippage existed in the system: moviemakers were precise, Cripps urges, but "not surgically so" (167). He focuses attention selectively, professing more interest in film noir than in, say, screwball comedy, because the former "made possible a new politics of the movies," which in turn gave rise to the social problem films of the postwar period (181).

But if he discounts some material, Cripps also redirects attention confidently: "Historians have not given Hollywood the benefit of the doubt for [its] ambiguous achievement" during the war years, he asserts (189). To correct this, Cripps provides a fascinating look at the liberal coalition formed by the office of War Information, the NAACP, and the studios: "America needed to redefine blacks in the nation's life both as a repudiation of Nazi racism and to show blacks that small

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favors were omens of a better future, not merely wartime necessities" (194). In keeping with Antonio Gramsci's notion that "oppressed groups' needs would be addressed in time of crisis" (195), the war, says Cripps, gave moviemakers "an unprecedented opportunity to rock the boat" (205).

Cripps repeatedly invokes Gramsci in these pages, approving his belief that contest and conflict drive culture. Although he acknowledges that "only a few [in Hollywood] had the freedom to take advantage" of the system's "tensions and fissures," he prefers Gramsci's model for its emphasis on negotiation and pragmatism (156). By focusing on "the politics of the popular" (7), Cripps hopes to account for how viewers endorse, for example, a star but not that star's politics: "Adoration of icons carried with it no politics. Fans learned from Humphrey Bogart how to hold a cigarette but not how to embrace his liberalism; they aped John Wayne's reeling gait but not his jingoism" (146). Fans accepted, argues Cripps, only what they were already inclined to accept. Similarly, he is committed to John Kenneth Galbraith's concept of "countervailing powers" which contend with and repeatedly correct one another. In lieu of the technology- and industry-based analyses of other historians, he stresses "the various supportive instruments that conveyed to moviegoers the assimilated, vaguely reformist ideology on which most movies rested" (143).

"Supportive instruments" may be a rather fuzzy formulation, but it is also a flexible one. It allows Cripps to consider, for instance, what strategies the immigrant Jewish moguls devised to compensate for their insularity and stay connected to audiences in the heartland (they hired gentiles as middle managers and deliberately cultivated the image of the studio as a family). It permits him, similarly, to assert the "prismatic quality" of audiences in this period, a trait fostered by the number and variety of viewing spaces open to them: "Ethnic and working-class moviegoers experienced a duality of selves, one normative and the other alternative. Only African Americans found this twoness to be represented in the laws" (52). A moviegoer's affiliation could change with the venue and the time of day, in addition to being influenced by his self-described identity: "Class was not caste" (45). Cripps rejects the argument that audiences were either autonomous or absorbed as too schematic; he says they were both (68).

Cripps' insistence on "both" is characteristic, since he argues throughout that "movies in Hollywood's classical era proffered an open-ended catholicity" (116). Moreover, as he sees history, there are few surprises: the "anticipatory audiences" of the 1920s were prepared for the coming of sound (99), which was only possible due to "a confluence of forces" anyway (107). The establishment in the 1920s of a national market for film was in line with the development of national markets in other industries; censorship followed naturally, as a way of protecting consumers. But there may, equally, be compensations. The "sectored and poor and fickle" audiences for political and ethnic alternative cinemas in time influenced the mainstream, as documentarians on both the left and right gained access to audiences during World War II (122). Race movies seeking a black audience were undermined by their inability to compete aesthetically with Hollywood fare, but the studios responded to their appearance by "adding increasingly sophisticated black roles to their product" (135). Documentaries made to extol black participation in the war effort made their way to educational institutions as surplus material after the war. Cripps sees American film history as pursuing a "reformist" trajectory, and he highlights the ways in which studios and markets routinely accommodated each other (165). This process of negotiation maintained a creative tension that was both productive and popular.

The final chapter, which describes the end of the studio era, finds the author distinctly out of humor with both the postwar process and its product, and it is, accordingly, the least compelling portion of the book. Cripps is at his best as an apologist, someone who sees the genius in a system, and he derides 50s films as "overblown," "puffed," and prone to "elephantiasis" as the era's aesthetic shifts from "real to superreal" (225). He feels distaste—or worse—for the postwar audience: the economic boom combined wealth and racism, "impell[ing] urbanites toward their cultural doom in the green-lawned suburbs far from the broadways and the rialtos and downtowns that had once provided them with a densely cultured experience, of which movies had been a large part" (185). He concludes that comparisons between Hollywood and Rome in decline are poetic though inaccurate; in line with his own elaboration of converging forces throughout the book, he argues that the postwar film capital was "being changed by alien, inexorable forces [like television, suburbanization, and antitrust suits], rather than declining as a result of internal rot" (233). But his own characterization of movies and moviegoers in this period is pretty rotten.

Cripps' view of the intersecting influences that shaped cinema is strongly marked by his personal responses. He spends a disproportionate amount of time on the Western because, of all the genres, it "most accessibly played out its role as tribal legend" (176), but also, as Cripps confesses, because of "the scenes I carry around . . . of Billy the Kid alone in a high-ceilinged cave, tending his small wisp of a fire, and Noah Beery, Jr., standing at the chuck wagon, licking sugar off his finger in *Red River*" (170). Never mind that it is Ivan Parry, not Noah Beery, in the cherished sequence; what gives Cripps' book heart is his individual stake in cinematic history, an investment he openly acknowledges. As he writes in the opening pages, "The history of Hollywood is the story of a crass, pandering, hypocritical, derivative, capitalist moviemaking machine, a machine whose products were *ours*, and we bought at least once a week during its classical era" (7). Such ownership as Cripps attests to here is hard-won: despite his several books on African-American images and filmmakers, writing this volume on the classical Hollywood cinema made him feel that he was entering "the capital of . . . a foreign culture" (xi). *Hollywood's High Noon* is a fluid, synthetic, and eminently readable volume which earns its author a key to that city.

Tricia Welsch teaches in the Department of Film Studies at Bowdoin College, in Maine.

The Image in Dispute

Art and Cinema in the Age of Photography

Edited by Dudley Andrew. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997. $40.00 cloth; $19.95 paper.

Whether supporting or opposed to the work of Walter Benjamin, most theorists will agree that his writings stand in (or near) the center of image analysis and interpretation theory. Realizing his influence, Dudley Andrew and the thirteen voices he privileges in *The Image in Dispute* search for ways to apply Benjamin's "decisively nonevolutionary" theories to contemporary society. Dividing the essays into three sections, Andrew traces the historical development of representational technology. In "Image Cultures 1890–1933," the life and writings of Benjamin are directly addressed. "Traditional Arts and the Shock of This Century's Image" probes into the art movements of the 60s and their ability to problematize Benjamin's theories. The final section, "Interpretation After Photography," looks at film and video as non-photographic entities which cannot be read through a Benjamin lens.

The first section establishes Benjamin as an important yet dated theorist, and seeks to establish new perspectives on the photographed image, cinema, flânerie, and modernity. In "Beauty's Veils," John Durham Peters asserts that "The danger of the mechanically reproduced image, in short, is beauty without history." A photograph must be seen as an object, not a subject, of the past. As an object, mechanical reproduction can stand only as a marker for a past experience and not as the experience itself. Attempting to resolve Benjamin's problematic of image and aura, Dudley Andrew's "Jules, Jim, and Walter Benjamin" likens the cinema to storytelling and translation. Rather than being a new art form that seeks to capture the real, the cinema, Andrew suggests, is merely an extension of a rich literary tradition. Changing gears and broaching the issue of spectatorship, Anke Gleber and Lauren Rabinovitz seek to establish a female flâneur in the space of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century society. Gleber promotes the reading that female spectatorship in the cinema combined with the popularity of city films (i.e., *Berlin: Symphony of a City*) gave women increased opportunity to look freely within the space of the city, thus granting them access to the title of flâneur. Similarly, Rabinovitz's study of the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition leads to the conclusion that the unrestricted public space of the exposition encouraged "a different kind of walking" and presumably a different kind of looking.

The second section looks at art culture's response to Benjamin. While Andrew views this second section as "an appropriately discontinuous chronicle," a unifying theme of distancing the spectator and questioning the real emerges from each article. Jennifer Pap writes of the Cubist movement's ability to separate and distance the experience of the viewer from the depicted image. With art no longer "a window on the world with its own reality," the viewer has to find a new way to approach the Cubist image and must realize that the image and the real are no longer synonymous. In "Pop Art/Pop Culture," Estera Milman offers a historical survey of the Museum of Modern Art's 1962 Symposium on Pop Art and its influence on 60s art culture. In her coverage of the symposium, Milman resurrects the many divergent voices of the conference to both problematize what is "real" and to reflect the incorporation and codification of the non-mainstream into the mainstream. Robert Newman presents a fascinating article in "(Re)imaging the Grotesque"; foreshadowing a later piece by James Lastra, he believes that the viewer creates narrative unity by bridging seemingly discontinuous images.

In the third section, which addresses film and video as arts apart from photography, Lastra ("From the Captured Moment to the Cinematic Image") writes that film differs from photography in that each frame is not a complete picture. The viewer, constantly aware of what is absent, eagerly awaits the next frame to complete the previous one. Jacques Aumont's reprinted "Variable Eye" and Charles O'Brien's "Afterword" speak of modernity's ability to render the eye (gaze) free from a single monocular viewpoint. While this increased mobility has made real human experience more accessible to spectators, both articles suggest that continued technological developments may transform the "variable eye" into a "cold eye," one "without a reference to the human who embodies it." In "Immediate History," Timothy Corrigan writes of the immediacy of video and its ability to instantaneously remake narrative history. Open to different perceptions and quick to replay actions, video problematizes spectator placement, identification, and perceptions of the real.

The Image in Dispute is an interesting collection that manages to blend thirteen different voices into one. In each essay, the theories from the previous article are advanced, theoretical holes are filled, and a comprehensive analysis of image representation is achieved.

Harvey Young teaches film analysis and interpretation at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

The Ministry of Illusion

Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife

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by Conrad Veidt (who ironically, had fled the Nazis) and fanatical crowds saluting *der Führer* are mostly found in American wartime films; the Ministry of Propaganda was far too clever to feed its audiences this sort of hysterical imagery.

It is also of interest to learn of the guesswork engaged in by the ministry (like many a Hollywood producer), as it tried to prophesy what might please German spectators. Its bureaucrats were not as powerful or omniscient as one might assume. Nonetheless, Rentschler is careful to emphasize that German films during the Nazi era were part of a culture industry in a totalitarian regime, and that while the ministry was sophisticated enough not to clobber audiences over the head with obvious ideology, entertainment was nonetheless orchestrated and directed to focus the attention of the viewer in specific ways that the ministry felt filled both political and human needs. Their objective was, as Rentschler writes, "the reshaping of the public imagination" (68), and the purpose of the films produced was both educational and recreational—an integral part of the "blood and soil" campaign by the Third Reich. The removal of any uncertainty and ambiguity in the presentation of subject matter was one of the primary tasks of the ministry, which controlled the product from script treatment to distribution.

Some of the primary questions the book poses are: What did films of the Nazi era look like? How did they recycle Hollywood images, since American cinema was immensely popular before the war? What can one learn from Goebbels' use of mass media? Here Rentschler makes a frightening correlation with the U.S. He writes:

> contemporary American media culture has more than a superficial or vicarious relationship with the Third Reich's society of spectacle. Indeed, the incessant recycling of Nazi sight and sound surely represents a crucial measure of today's postmodernism. A direct line leads from the Nazi's vanguard deployment of pyrotechnic histrionics and audiovisual excesses to the profuse present-day investment in constant simulations and hyperreal events (6–7).

What was the response of the German audience at the time? The author seeks to illuminate the complexity of the ideological and aesthetic strategies that serve to reveal the "psychopathology" of the Nazi era. What is important for Rentschler is that the films of the Third Reich did not suddenly appear like parasites on an unwilling host, but grew out of prior conceptions and tastes in art.

Rentschler evocatively describes the trajectory from films of Weimar decadence (with their fixation on sexual promiscuity, depictions of low life, and general air of confusion) to films that supported some of the basic premises underlying Nazi ideology (e.g., sex as unwholesome and indulgent, and the beneficial results of the suppression of physical desire), and the fixation—so familiar to us from images from *Triumph of the Will*—on the rigidity of the body. One of the many strong points of Rentschler's work is that he will focus a discussion on a particular film as representative of an issue, or series of issues, but will also introduce dozens of other titles from the same era that support his contentions or have similar aesthetic leanings.

The author's basic strategy is to divide the book into chapters which deal with analyses of a variety of different films. Chapters focus on the *Berg* (or mountain) film; the Nazi youth film; the *Heimat* (homeland) film; the Germans' attempt to emulate the success of Hollywood film (which achieved enormous popularity in prewar Germany) with their own version of a screwball comedy; the examination of women in Nazi cinema (with Zarah Leander, who was originally Swedish) as the exemplar; the infamous anti-Semitic *Jew Süss*; the return of Wiemar director G.W. Pabst to direct *Paracelsus*—classical auteur or complicitous sell-out?; and the post-Stanlingrad fantasy/wish fulfillment, *Münchausen.*

Perhaps most interesting are the chapters in which Rentschler offers a revisionist reading of a film. A good example is his take on Detlef Sierck's (later Douglas Sirk) supposedly subversive *La Habanera*, in which Zarah Leander played the lead. The author states at one point, quoting a contemporaneous source, that in the German *Filmwelt* (filmworld) of the Nazi era, "not everything, but much, was possible," in particular a potential latitude concerning morality and sex. Zarah Leander (still a favorite of German drag queens) was an overtly sexualized although highly androgynous figure, in her later years compared by Rentschler to Judy Garland. Both Goebbels and Hitler disapproved of Leander and would have preferred a German woman as a role model, as well as a far less sexualized one. But neither powerful figure could influence the German audience's taste for Leander's Garboesque mystique. Rentschler argues that while *La Habanera* (like many of Sirk's later works) is taken by most as a subversive film, it worked to the advantage of the Nazis. The audience needed both a filmmaker and a star who acknowledged needs not provided for or permitted in everyday life, thus making the film a safety valve of sorts for the ministry: "Films like *La Habanera* demonstrated that excess, irony, and distanciation could reaffirm rather than destablize the status quo" (144).

Rentschler's interpretation of the notorious *Jew Süss*, while not revisionist, adds much to one's understanding of the film. It was the general opinion of the *völkisch* agitators that the Jew, "the alien tribe" (155), had contaminated the film industry. This pollution was characterized by the absence of spirituality or genuine German character even in Weimar films. (The idea of infestation or the Jew as vermin was literalized in the use of the deadly insecticide Cyclon B in the death camps.) Rentschler then makes the connection between the Jew and the vampire, both invading the world like the rats in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, and as seen in Max Schreck's rat-like "Jewish" visage. He then goes on to utilize the concept of invasion in Leni Riefenstahl's *Das Blaue Licht*, where the outside society seeks out and destroys the pure and magical world of the mountain girl, Junta (played by Riefenstahl). In a final coup, Rentschler claims that the portrayal of the Jew in *Jew Süss* as tyrant, manipulator, and as "the faithful servant of the sovereign" (164) is nothing

more than a displaced image of the Nazis themselves, and foreshadows the Nazi mantra at the Nuremburg trials: "I was only doing my duty." The author also chronicles the interesting struggles with revisionists who want to redeem films like *Jew Süss* and its filmmaker, Veit Harlan, by disavowing the hateful ideology and looking only at the film's aesthetic and narrative dimensions (a tall order, in this case).

Rentschler is to be congratulated for his seemingly effortless melding of prodigious amounts of primary and secondary source materials (including original program brochures, press kits, police records, etc.), his lengthy and informative filmographies, extraordinary bibliography, his excellent data on the various films' reception history, as well as his own philosophical, historical, and political analysis. He is also to be commended as one of the few writers on German film to use formal analysis to support his theses about specific films. One must also mention that Rentschler manages to discuss these films without endlessly moralizing. But neither is Rentschler cowardly about the works and filmmakers under discussion when he writes about the collusion of certain directors, actors, producers, and screenwriters with the Nazi regime. Luis Trenker, in spite of all evidence that he was a happy Nazi camper, was championed before his death by historians such as William K. Everson, and given a grand fête in Berlin in 1992. And Leni Riefenstahl, who has not managed as smooth or as complete a rehabilitation as Trenker, is still celebrated by many in spite of all the evidence (which she later contradicted) that clearly points to her agreement with and support of Nazi party policy.

On a final note, in Rentschler's epilogue he writes: "Mass culture also became a crucial precondition for mass murder" (212). Although he explains much about Nazi cinema well and thoroughly—the ways in which it satisfied wish fulfilment, suppressed consciousness of the realities of the war, and supported long-cherished German prejudices, Rentschler never really explains how these films might lead *ein Volk* to murder millions of "the other." Perhaps it can never be explained in terms of a cultural phenomenon. In spite of all the ceaseless social, political, philosophical, historical, and ideological scrutiny of the Third Reich, one of the cataclysmic events of our century may remain beyond our comprehension.

Carole Zucker teaches at Concordia University, Montreal, and is currently working on a study of British performance.

Movie Censorship and American Culture

Edited by Francis G. Couvares. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Press, 1996. $45.00 cloth; $17.95 paper.

This informative anthology studies some of the representative cultural struggles that raised issues of censorship from the time of the earliest motion pictures to the 1990s. The authors consider controversies created by the movies' depictions of diverse subjects—sexuality, crime, religion,

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"[A] sensitively observed and thoughtful contribution to film humanism. Treating film as an *art* in thedeepest sense of the word, Singer shows readers why they should take film seriously and how to do it." — Noel Carroll, University of Wisconsin, Madison

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ethnicity, and ideology, for example—and examine the pressures that various citizens' groups brought on the motion picture industry as well as the efforts of Hollywood leaders to deal with these protests. Editor Francis G. Couvares has assembled an all-star group of contributors for the task, including a number of individuals who have been especially prominent in the recent scholarship on film and culture.

The editor provides one of the best essays in the book, a study entitled "Hollywood, Main Street, and the Church." In an insightful analysis, Couvares produces some surprises for those unfamiliar with the details of the battles over regulating movies in the 1920s and 1930s. Couvares shows, for example, that Protestants in the United States had difficulty agreeing about what they liked and disliked and what they tolerated or wanted regulated. Those who sought regulation of the movies had to take into account different regional standards, particularly the more liberal viewpoints of the East Coast and the more conservative perspectives from America's heartland. Couvares also reveals that Catholics were uncomfortable with government-centered censorship (Catholics feared state power in a predominantly Protestant society), and preferred arrangements for self-regulation of the movies—a strategy that nicely suited the interests of the film business. The editor also notes the way America's three major religious groups performed different but connected roles in Hollywood's enterprises. The industry was largely financed by Protestant bankers, operated by Jewish studio executives, and policed by Catholic bureaucrats.

Ruth Vasey's study of Hollywood's market relationships with the world also delivers interesting details. Summarizing many of the important conclusions in her recent book (*The World According to Hollywood, 1918-1939*), Vasey shows that international groups often protested loudly against Hollywood's portrayals of their countrymen, and that these complaints worried motion picture executives, who did not want to lose valuable foreign markets. Hollywood worried about the reaction of the British, especially, because Britain represented about 30 percent of the value of the international market for American films. British authorities expressed a number of objections about American movies, complaining about films that, for instance, showed cruelty to animals, portrayed Christian ceremonies in offensive ways, or gave critical views of Britain's colonial relations. Other nationalities also leveled protests that troubled the studio executives: the Chinese criticized racial stereotypes, and the Mexicans objected to the movies' characterizations of the Mexican villain. Hollywood dealt with these international pressures by devising homogenous characterizations that lacked specific identification with a nationality and by telling stories about nonspecific, fictional foreign societies.

The other essays provide a variety of perspectives on censorship issues. Some of the studies focus tightly on one person's story, while others provide a broader picture of developments. In the studies of individuals, Charlene Regester offers an interesting look at the talented and provocative African-American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux, whose bold portrayals in nearly 50 films produced between 1918 and 1948 managed to anger both whites and blacks. Micheaux attacked the bigotry of the KKK directly as well as white squeamishness about interracial romance, but he also exposed problems in the black community, noting the color prejudice of light-skinned African Americans and the troublesome behavior of hypocritical ministers and corrupt politicians. Marybeth Hamilton observes the tremendous popularity of Mae West in the late 20s and early 30s, and argues that West excited resistance not only because of her brazen sexuality but because she challenged gender relationships, relishing sexual power and independence from male control. West's popularity slipped quickly after 1934, when censorship erased much of the sexuality and humor that had made her movies popular.

In other essays, Charles Musser examines the evangelical Christians' early embracing of the movies, Daniel Czitrom looks at the politics of early movie censorship in New York, and Alison M. Parker studies the efforts of the Women's Christian Temperance Union to protect children from the movies' influences. Richard Maltby reviews the controversies caused by the attempts to turn Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* into a movie, and Stephen Vaughn reviews the controversies surrounding ideas being expressed by members of the Hollywood Ten. Garth Jowett studies the importance of the *Miracle* decision and other opinions delivered by the courts in the 1950s and 1960s that challenged traditions of movie censorship, and Charles Lyons brings the analysis up-to-date by considering public protests against recently made productions such as *Year of the Dragon*, *Basic Instinct*, and *The Last Temptation of Christ.*

The anthology carries the title "Movie Censorship and American Culture," but the material is clearly skewed toward the first part of the title. The authors concentrate their discussions on criticisms of the movies' portrayals and the efforts of Hollywood to deal with these objections, and not much attention is paid to the people and the cultures that resisted Hollywood's entertainment. A fuller discussion of the social milieu and ideas of the protesters would be helpful for understanding the conditions that fostered demands for censorship.

The treatments raise several questions: Why did many individuals in the first half of the century find motion pictures objectionable? Did they view movies similarly or differently from other forms of mass entertainment? Why were pressures for regulation of motion picture content far more fashionable in the America of the early twentieth century than the late twentieth century? What was occurring in the political and cultural background (such as the Progressive Movement or the cultural wars of the 20s) that made the struggle over movies and censorship seem particularly compelling? What changed in American society that reduced the public's enthusiasm for censorship? The authors sometimes make brief references to these broader questions about "culture," but they do not offer extensive discussions of them. Garth Jowett, for instance, writes about court cases almost in a vacuum. He says little about the transformations in

American society in the 1950s and 1960s that made the growing judicial discomfort with censorship seem appropriate. Richard Maltby introduces the disputes over *An American Tragedy* with the vague explanation that "both its detailed actions and its thematic concerns were inappropriate to an affirmative medium" (107). Although Maltby later provides a little more evidence about themes in *An American Tragedy* that could seem offensive to movie audiences in the early 1930s, we never obtain a detailed explanation of why some considered the story particularly provocative.

In the final essay, Charles Lyons provides a fascinating overview of some of the recent public protests against Hollywood's depictions, including the objections of Chinese Americans to ethnic portrayals in *Year of the Dragon*, gay criticism of depictions in *Basic Instinct*, and the Christian Right's objections to the release of *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Lyons warns that the protests "reveal that the censorious impulse was still alive" (290). There is an element of hyperbole here, pressured perhaps by the reference to "censorship" in the book's title. American society has moved dramatically away from sentiment for movie censorship in recent decades, and the clamor of Chinese Americans, gays, and evangelical Christians hardly represents a return to the censorious spirit. Even the Chinese Americans' demands for curbing the distribution of *Year of the Dragon* and their request for creation of a Chinese-American board to review movie scripts constitute little more than the exaggerated claims of an angry group in the heat of protest (the demands had no chance of acceptance from Hollywood executives and no hope of broad public support).

Stephen Vaughn's essay, "Political Censorship and the Hollywood Ten," allows an interesting twist of interpretation. Like many writers on the Hollywood Ten, Vaughn expresses sympathy for the troubled writers under attack from the viciously anti-Communist House Un-American Activities Committee. Yet the information he provides about the ideas of leading Hollywood Ten members illustrates how they got into trouble in the tense period of growing disagreements with the Soviet Union. Vaughn shows that one of the Ten's most articulate members, John Howard Lawson, argued that "film is ideology"(238), and claimed that "class struggle was the driving force of history" (248). Vaughn also notes that various members of the Hollywood Ten justified the Soviet Union's interventionist foreign policy, favored a Marxist orientation, described capitalism as the root of American society's troubles, traced the roots of racism to capitalism, and called American foreign policy a manifestation of Western imperialism. At the end of the essay, Vaughn says the Hollywood Ten's critique of American society won much greater public acceptance "when a new generation came of age during the 1960s and 1970s." The Ten did, indeed, win greater sympathy in later years, but that interest probably had much more to do with American society's growing discomfort with the excesses of anti-Communism than with sympathy for the ideas that Vaughn attributes to the Hollywood Ten.

Movie Censorship and American Culture displays some shortcomings common to anthologies that require authors to address large subjects in relatively brief essays. The work is, nevertheless, an informative and useful addition to the scholarship about Hollywood's relationship with diverse and often critical audiences.

Robert Brent Toplin teaches in the Department of History at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

Moving Pictures

A New Theory of Film Genres, Feelings and Cognition

By Torben Kragh Grodal. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. $75.00.

In what is perhaps the most ambitious work in film theory to be published this past year, Torben Grodal has attempted to outline a holistic theory of the experience of visual fiction. He sees body, mind, and world as an interacting whole, and states up front his basic hypothesis "that cognitive and perceptual processes are intimately linked with emotional processes within a functionally unified psychosomatic whole" (1). In *Moving Pictures*, Grodal has undertaken a mammoth task that is of necessity an eclectic enterprise, drawing from fields such as aesthetics, philosophy, visual perception, social and cognitive psychology, and neuroscience. Given the size and nature of the task, he has been remarkably successful.

It was once widely assumed that cognitive film theory was best suited to analyses of rational processes, such as problem solving, while psychoanalytic models were better able to explain the irrational, nonconscious level of human responses, including emotions. The implication was that cognitive paradigms were unable to deal with emotion. With this book, Grodal joins a group of film theorists who in recent publications have rejected that idea and demonstrated with clarity that cognitive theories have a significant contribution to make in explaining a viewer's emotional response to a film (e.g., Murray Smith's *Engaging Characters* [1995]; Ed Tan's *Emotion and the Structure of Narrative Film* [1996]; and *Passionate Views: Thinking about Film and Emotions* [1997], edited by Carl Plantinga and Gregory Smith).

Grodal explicitly rejects the notion that psychoanalytic theories provide better explanations of emotion:

> Psychoanalytic theories describe desires and emotions in relation to cognitive functions within a romantic, dualist model incompatible with a theory that describes cognition and emotion as aspects of a functionally unified psychosomatic whole (5).

Furthermore, he refuses to accept the relegating of emotions to the realm of the irrational. "Emotions are not irrational forces," he writes, "but necessary motivators for cognition and the possible resulting actions" (44).

Having established this definition of emotion, Grodal goes on to demonstrate how it is possible to characterize

American society in the 1950s and 1960s that made the growing judicial discomfort with censorship seem appropriate. Richard Maltby introduces the disputes over *An American Tragedy* with the vague explanation that "both its detailed actions and its thematic concerns were inappropriate to an affirmative medium" (107). Although Maltby later provides a little more evidence about themes in *An American Tragedy* that could seem offensive to movie audiences in the early 1930s, we never obtain a detailed explanation of why some considered the story particularly provocative.

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narrative patterns and film genres based upon their emotional effects. He describes how a mental flow induced by film viewing—from the visual cortex to the association areas, then to frontal areas, ending in the premotor areas of the brain—may be blocked in any of its phases, or even reversed in direction to produce specifiable affective responses in the viewer. He offers a four-step model, generously illustrated with diagrams throughout the work. I will offer only a short and simplified description of his model.

First, there is basic perception, the visual analysis of textures, lines, and figures. This process creates "intensities" without any meaning in the ordinary sense of the word. Many abstract paintings and experimental films produce an input that can only be processed at this basic level. Step two consists of memory matching: "the brain runs through its memory-files for possible matches" (60). The items are stored, he points out, not only by visual structures but also with affective values. If a film concentrates its representations on this level, the effect of the film is normally labeled "lyrical" (60). Step three involves the construction of a diegesis, the "framework of a hypothetical narrative scenario" (60). This leads to step four, in which the viewer identifies with a character or characters in the narrative in order to label the physiological and emotional reactions produced by the flow. The reactions may be of several types, but Grodal provides three basic categories: voluntary telic (goal-oriented) responses; paratelic responses (semi-voluntary responses which are not goal-directed but repetitious); and autonomic responses (involuntary responses such as crying, laughing, shivering, or making involuntary body movements).

Grodal argues that the way in which human beings process this flow of information are innate and in large part the result of evolutionary adaptation. He therefore maintains that these basic strategies are valid across cultures. In relation to the classical Hollywood style, for instance, he argues that

> formal patterns may be representations of prototypical ways in which our embodied minds relate to the world, and thus may be motivated in a stronger sense than by mere ideological motivation (Barthes) or by representing a historical style (Bordwell). . . . The classical style might be a "timeless formula" based on certain prototypical ways of making mental models of reality, and yet still be one artistic option among several (7–8).

Grodal goes to considerable lengths to ground his theory in an understanding of visual perception. He provides for the reader a clear and concise summary of the very complex theory of vision presented by perceptual psychologist David Marr (52-53). It is, in fact, the best summary of Marr's theory that I have read in a work on film psychology or perception. Grodal also underpins his theory with an explanation of the evolutionary development of pertinent cognitive and emotional capacities in the viewer. In that it is informed by an understanding of visual perception and the evolutionary basis of human processes and strategies, his position is akin to Joseph Anderson's ecological approach to cognitive film theory (*Reality of Illusion* [1996]). Grodal provides discussions of evolutionary and functional rationales not only for the concepts presented in the first part of his book, but also, in the second part, for specific genres and narrative patterns such as comedy, crime and horror fiction, metafictions, and melodramas.

The reading of *Moving Pictures* is demanding, even difficult at times. The syntax is unusual and at times complex (which may, of course, be the result of translation), and the reader is required to retain a number of conceptual terms. A glossary is provided at the back of the book, which is a considerable help, but frequent referral is needed both to the glossary and to previous sections where terminology is explained and put into context. I do not, however, mean to give the impression that the reading of *Moving Pictures* is a laborious or grim task. The work is punctuated throughout with instances of Grodal's engagingly direct and wry sense of humor, and one often smiles or even laughs aloud at these passages in addition to appreciating their insightfulness—as, for example, with the following:

> The cognitive processes, which Freud and others call "secondary" processes, are, from the point of view of evolution, the primary ones, which we share with the rest of the animal kingdom because we want to perceive and represent the world in such a way that by actions we can implement our body-brain preferences in an optimal way. It is not because we fathers want [our] small sons to stop wishing for sex with their mothers that we can distinguish a tiger from a cat, and that we fear the first and stroke the second, but because, without this distinction, we will probably die (5–6).

Torben Grodal's *Moving Pictures* is a valuable contribution to the field of film theory and rewards the reader well for the effort.

Barbara Anderson is Managing Director for the Center for Cognitive Studies in Film and Video in Atlanta, Georgia.

Music and the Silent Film

Contexts & Case Studies, 1895–1924

By Martin Miller Marks. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. $45.00.

Marks neither promises nor delivers a comprehensive history—he invites others to take up the challenge and provides them with the tools to make this work much easier. Indeed, after *Music and the Silent Film*, the kind of awkward speculations about silent film music accompaniment that film scholars have traditionally tolerated should become less uncomfortable and much more inspired.

As a beginning film student, my earliest encounter with silent film occurred in an auditorium with a group of first-year students uncertain what to expect (let alone what to

narrative patterns and film genres based upon their emotional effects. He describes how a mental flow induced by film viewing—from the visual cortex to the association areas, then to frontal areas, ending in the premotor areas of the brain—may be blocked in any of its phases, or even reversed in direction to produce specifiable affective responses in the viewer. He offers a four-step model, generously illustrated with diagrams throughout the work. I will offer only a short and simplified description of his model.

First, there is basic perception, the visual analysis of textures, lines, and figures. This process creates "intensities" without any meaning in the ordinary sense of the word. Many abstract paintings and experimental films produce an input that can only be processed at this basic level. Step two consists of memory matching: "the brain runs through its memory-files for possible matches" (60). The items are stored, he points out, not only by visual structures but also with affective values. If a film concentrates its representations on this level, the effect of the film is normally labeled "lyrical" (60). Step three involves the construction of a diegesis, the "framework of a hypothetical narrative scenario" (60). This leads to step four, in which the viewer identifies with a character or characters in the narrative in order to label the physiological and emotional reactions produced by the flow. The reactions may be of several types, but Grodal provides three basic categories: voluntary telic (goal-oriented) responses; paratelic responses (semi-voluntary responses which are not goal-directed but repetitious); and autonomic responses (involuntary responses such as crying, laughing, shivering, or making involuntary body movements).

Grodal argues that the way in which human beings process this flow of information are innate and in large part the result of evolutionary adaptation. He therefore maintains that these basic strategies are valid across cultures. In relation to the classical Hollywood style, for instance, he argues that

> formal patterns may be representations of prototypical ways in which our embodied minds relate to the world, and thus may be motivated in a stronger sense than by mere ideological motivation (Barthes) or by representing a historical style (Bordwell). . . . The classical style might be a "timeless formula" based on certain prototypical ways of making mental models of reality, and yet still be one artistic option among several (7–8).

Grodal goes to considerable lengths to ground his theory in an understanding of visual perception. He provides for the reader a clear and concise summary of the very complex theory of vision presented by perceptual psychologist David Marr (52-53). It is, in fact, the best summary of Marr's theory that I have read in a work on film psychology or perception. Grodal also underpins his theory with an explanation of the evolutionary development of pertinent cognitive and emotional capacities in the viewer. In that it is informed by an understanding of visual perception and the evolutionary basis of human processes and strategies, his position is akin to Joseph Anderson's ecological approach to cognitive film theory (*Reality of Illusion* [1996]). Grodal provides discussions of evolutionary and functional rationales not only for the concepts presented in the first part of his book, but also, in the second part, for specific genres and narrative patterns such as comedy, crime and horror fiction, metafictions, and melodramas.

The reading of *Moving Pictures* is demanding, even difficult at times. The syntax is unusual and at times complex (which may, of course, be the result of translation), and the reader is required to retain a number of conceptual terms. A glossary is provided at the back of the book, which is a considerable help, but frequent referral is needed both to the glossary and to previous sections where terminology is explained and put into context. I do not, however, mean to give the impression that the reading of *Moving Pictures* is a laborious or grim task. The work is punctuated throughout with instances of Grodal's engagingly direct and wry sense of humor, and one often smiles or even laughs aloud at these passages in addition to appreciating their insightfulness—as, for example, with the following:

> The cognitive processes, which Freud and others call "secondary" processes, are, from the point of view of evolution, the primary ones, which we share with the rest of the animal kingdom because we want to perceive and represent the world in such a way that by actions we can implement our body-brain preferences in an optimal way. It is not because we fathers want [our] small sons to stop wishing for sex with their mothers that we can distinguish a tiger from a cat, and that we fear the first and stroke the second, but because, without this distinction, we will probably die (5–6).

Torben Grodal's *Moving Pictures* is a valuable contribution to the field of film theory and rewards the reader well for the effort.

Barbara Anderson is Managing Director for the Center for Cognitive Studies in Film and Video in Atlanta, Georgia.

Music and the Silent Film

Contexts & Case Studies, 1895–1924

By Martin Miller Marks. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. $45.00.

Marks neither promises nor delivers a comprehensive history—he invites others to take up the challenge and provides them with the tools to make this work much easier. Indeed, after *Music and the Silent Film*, the kind of awkward speculations about silent film music accompaniment that film scholars have traditionally tolerated should become less uncomfortable and much more inspired.

As a beginning film student, my earliest encounter with silent film occurred in an auditorium with a group of first-year students uncertain what to expect (let alone what to

look for in the films). While a few of the reels included a sound track of solo piano pieces, others were accompanied by a cassette of instrumental music. My professor explained that while she did not know if the film sound tracks were close to being historically accurate, she was fairly certain that complete silence would be historically mistaken, if not socially unacceptable. With a copy of Brian Eno's *Music for Airports* providing an oblique background, many of these films acquired a furtive resonance between the projected images and the eccentric ambience of Eno's pieces. The ill-at-ease encounters of contemporary music and early film, each of which came with its own aesthetic goals, remain as powerful a viewing experience as I have ever enjoyed. Another reason for the tense and nervous viewing atmosphere was the speculatory nature of the presentation. There existed little evidence of whether or not any of these films had been presented with specific music or any music at all, let alone any suggestion of how the music would be rendered. In an area of film music studies that historically has been dominated by idle speculation rather than detailed research, Martin Marks' *Music and the Silent Film: Contexts & Case Studies, 1895–1924* exists as a substantial step forward in divining how film music operated in a number of pre-sound contexts.

In part, his study is important because silent film music has not received a great deal of historical or theoretical attention. Indeed, this analytical lack is so profound that it has become something of a cliché in film studies to open books and papers on film music by noting that the field suffers from considerable scholarly neglect. There are significant reasons for this widespread ignorance. As Marks points out, "Film music is a neglected subject because it straddles two disciplines but also because its material poses many problems for the researcher" (4). Fortunately, Marks' proficiency as a musicologist combined with his understanding of film history transcends any research problems that might be encountered in the broad array of topics presented in *Music and the Silent Film.* Beginning with a thorough review of film music analysis from the silent period to recent scholarship, Marks demonstrates that film music studies has always encompassed a wide assortment of issues and analytical foci ranging from the most pragmatic to the most obscure. These include questions of score composition, compilation, variations, and the myriad of needs involved in film exhibition. Not only does the literature review underscore the collection of problems that exist in the film music studies, it also acts as a significant resource for those who hope to engage in film music research.

Marks is at his best when he places his musicological analyses in well-researched historical contexts. Through extensive archival research, Marks recovers enough film scores and cue sheets to provide detailed analyses of Max Sklandowsky's Bioskop presentations, Camille Saint-Saens' composition for *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise*, Walter Cleveland Simon's score for Kalem's *An Arabian Tragedy*, Erik Satie's score for René Clair's *Entr'acte*, and, most importantly, Joseph Breil's score for D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation.* But for this reviewer, Marks' most inspired moments result from his detailed exploration of the musical issues discussed in *Moving Picture World.* This work comprises the majority of his chapter on American film music between 1910 to 1914. The chapter begins with an interesting analysis of the Kalem Company's experiment in designing film music for *An Arabian Tragedy*, fosters a discussion of S.L. "Roxy" Rothapfel's detailed interest in film music presentation as an essential element in the art behind his picture palaces, and ends with a brief but insightful look at Breil's early film scores. Throughout the chapter, Marks places the extant scores of the era in a dialogue with the demands of an industry that is simultaneously searching for a new, middle-class set of audiences. His work suggests that this period of American film music is something of a wide-spread, non-unified set of aesthetic experiments whose conditions were determined by an evolving trinity of composer-exhibitor-film producer (eventually director, as in the case of Griffith). While the chapter offers several case studies rather than a linear historical narrative, Marks' work is of such quality that it opens up territories typically left uninvestigated in film music analyses for both future historical research and aesthetic deliberation.

After an extended analysis of the music for *Birth of a Nation*, Marks ends his book with a brief but enlightening chapter on Satie's score for *Entr'acte.* As two of the most celebrated films in the history of cinema, both *Birth of a Nation*'s and *Entr'acte*'s markedly dissimilar cinematic ambitions are gleaned from Marks' analysis of each score's textual aspirations. While Marks argues convincingly that the *Birth of a Nation* score was positioned by Breil and Griffith to serve the needs of the on-screen text, *Entr'acte*'s score follows Satie's desire to create a "furniture music," music that "creates a vibration" and resonates with the on-screen imagery rather than providing support for the narrative.

The juxtaposition of the two cases begs the question of whether or not European and American cases from this period can (or should) be compared with each other. Indeed, if Marks' work suffers, it is from the breadth of his research. While some readers may applaud such ambitions, it remains unclear whether such contextual leaps can be made in researching silent film history, no matter how mythically international the period was. For example, despite their fame, it is not clear if either *Entr'acte* or *Birth of a Nation* negotiated similar exhibitionary concerns when presented in their international, let alone interstate, circulation. Given silent film music's dependence on the on-site decisions of house management, the best that Marks can claim in his close analyses is that the combination of the film and the score had a specific textual and historical set of aims. To know whether or not these goals were achieved would require further research.

Nevertheless, the comparison between the two scores offers an excellent insight into the incredible diversity of silent film music, and underlines the pleasure of reading an ambitious work that brings a wonderful historical mind and aesthetic imagination to bear on a much-overlooked topic.

Tim Anderson teaches at Northwestern University.

Pretty in Pink

The Golden Age of Teenage Movies

By Jonathan Bernstein. New York: St. Martin's/Griffin, 1997. $14.95.

American films about teenagers have enjoyed an interesting history, from the early roles of the Gish sisters and Mickey Rooney to such landmarks of teen turbulence as *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Blackboard Jungle*, *Last Summer*, and *Carrie*. Yet a codified "teen cinema" may not have emerged prominently until the 1980s, when suddenly scores of films depicting youth were released in the U.S. (over 500 by my count). Why this decade became such a prosperous, if not profound, era for teen films is a germane question, one which Jonathan Bernstein begins to consider in his readily accessible and hip compendium, *Pretty in Pink*.

Hollywood in the 80s, according to Bernstein, was catering to an ever younger audiences with increasing disposable incomes who gathered around mall multiplexes in "an AIDS-free adventure playground with the promise of prosperity around every corner" (1). However, Bernstein only briefly mentions the many significant social, political, and economic conditions of the time, a shortcoming that is more glaring when he then attempts to study the representations of youth in these films. According to Bernstein, for some reason teens in 80s films became more concerned about being popular than about challenging cultural conditions; he hints that increasing divorce rates and the consumerist economy may have been factors, a claim that is simplistic at best and misleading at worst, especially since teenagers have always sought popularity while challenging contemporary codes and have never controlled their own filmic images. What quickly becomes evident, as Bernstein admits, is that he has no intention of examining an "exhaustive collection" of these films, and even though he does address about 150 teen films (at least 30 of which are actually about college students and non-teens), his review process is rather skewed to easily fit his generalizing remarks about the hedonism and angst portrayed in the films he describes. This yields nostalgic reflections that can be amusing, although Bernstein's arguments remain self-fulfilling and lacking in much insight. (The book also lacks a much-needed index or filmography.)

Pretty in Pink reminds us of the difficulty and subjectivity of defining a genre composed of social types, or even more, of creating a taxonomy for a genre's subgenres that is consistent and reliable and which actually sheds light upon important issues of representation within those subgenres rather than just their means and modes of production. Despite a handful of studies since the 80s that have attempted to describe various aspects of teen films, only a few have explored on a generic level the varieties and differences of representation within teen films, as has been done with films about other social groups (for instance, African Americans, Jews, Native Americans, veterans, women, the disabled, the working class, and so on). Bernstein appears to initiate such an endeavor by dividing his book into chapters relevant to the typological heading of his introduction—"Loners, Stoners, Princesses, Cheerleaders, Geeks, Jocks and Dweebs"—but we soon see that this is simply a convenient way to make chapters rather than any particularly meaningful interrogation of how these different (stereo)types are portrayed and operate in teen films.

Since each chapter only minimally attempts to investigate motifs and patterns within subgenres of the teen film, we find Bernstein moving capriciously through various "styles" of youth imaging: he discusses the sex comedy, the slasher film, the sci-fi tale, the teen melodrama, and that short-lived but ubiquitous teen staple of the mid-80s, the "John Hughes movie." These are legitimate divisions, but again he offers little explanation as to why these styles emerged and evolved as they did, and rarely does he even consider how their generic presence was integral to the 80s. What he does offer are copious plot descriptions of many films with scant critical commentary, recounting a film's action for pages before jotting down his own ideas about the film in a sentence or two. This may have been his editorial assignment, but even the most facile reading of these films demands more reaction, more intuition, and more creative critiques.

The book does develop and maintain a lively rhythm; Bernstein's writing is droll, biting, and occasionally pithy. He rides roughshod over the extensive teen horror subgenre in less than 20 pages, making the fine observation that these films have their narrative foundation in "T&A" and "nerd" films and then letting no demonstration of that get in the way of his snappy plot recountings. Bernstein shows his most intense interest in recalling the Hughesian melodramas of the 80s, both those written or directed by the angst auteur (*Sixteen Candles*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Pretty in Pink*) and those he subsequently influenced (such as *Secret Admirer*, *Can't Buy Me Love*, *Say Anything*). Here he makes relatively astute remarks about cultural and class issues that defy the superficial tone of most of the book, such as his summation of Hughes's characters: "They were . . . almost entirely denizens of an upper-middle-class white-bread world and the agonies which assailed them seemed tame even at the time. No drive-bys, no drug addiction, no physical abuse, no gangs—but the way they were magnified into melodrama made empathy inescapable" (53).

Bernstein implies that he has particular inside industry information—he cites a few shooting scripts and test screenings—although the book would have been better served by other critical commentaries or even reactions by viewers who saw these films as teenagers. (He does quote Courtney Love calling *The Breakfast Club* "the defining moment of the 'alternative' generation" [55].) Instead, we wade through chapter after chapter of plot summaries and jabs at teen actors, such as this description of Andrew McCarthy: "A pair of panicked eyes that bulged out like those of a deer caught in headlights and a mouth stuck in the permanent pucker of a cat's asshole" (117). Sometimes his coverage of a specific film, such as *Young Guns* (170), takes

up less space than the production still accompanying it, and often his terse evaluations are woefully incomplete and inconsistent, as in his one-paragraph review of *River's Edge*, one of the most important teen films of the 80s. He notes that the 1989 film *Heathers*, "in fact, killed the genre that inspired it stone dead" (180), calling attention to how weakly he has defined the teen genre as well as his dismissal of the post-80s films that continued and revised it, such as *Pump Up the Volume*, *Boyz N the Hood*, and *Menace II Society* (the book is especially lacking in discussing of race issues).

Along the way, Bernstein misses many obvious opportunities to expand upon other intriguing issues, such as the six-month transformation of the Brat Pack in 1985 from high school characters in *The Breakfast Club* to college grads in *St. Elmo's Fire*, or the embarrassingly untimely release of *SpaceCamp* just months after the 1986 Challenger tragedy, and he minimizes the conspicuous shift of dominant teen images in general, from the 1980s anxious adolescents to the cynical Generation X post-teens of the 1990s. His five-page overview of 90s films begins with the good point that 90s youth "distrust the very same media that suckled them" (217) as 80s kids, but the chapter still ends up as a shopping list of titles about which Bernstein has little to say, and he misses a crucial chance to at least speculate on how and why the teen genre has developed in the 90s and will change over the next social and generic cycles.

Bernstein is understandably writing for a very wide audience, from the teens of today who may pick up *Pretty in Pink* to "discover" the youth films of the past decade, to 20-somethings who came to love and loathe those films when they were teens, to middle-agers like Bernstein himself, who weren't teenagers in the 80s but still find a certain fascination in why that era was so ripe with Hollywood products about pubescents. The problem is that for as much as Bernstein claims to love teen films from the 80s, he treats most of them with utter contempt, and thus vanquishes much of the allure and curiosity—and even the pop culture thrills—from these otherwise compelling documents of young adult life.

To say that teen films inspire no more than the cursory and cute gloss that *Pretty in Pink* provides is to deny the cultural and generational significance of these films. The teen cinema has helped to financially sustain the film industry for the past 15 years, and moreover, it has diversely and dramatically represented (or misrepresented) the population whose members are becoming the leaders of the early 21st century. That population deserves a more insightful evaluation of their cinematic images than this book allows.

Timothy Shary received his Ph.D. from the Department of Communication at the University of Massachusetts.

A Talent for Trouble

The Life of Hollywood's Most Acclaimed Director, William Wyler

By Jan Herman. New York: Da Capo Press, 1997. $16.95.

When I presented the first public retrospective of William Wyler's films in 1962 at the University of California, Berkeley, the director appeared in person, responding graciously and with some surprise to the enthusiastic audience. Succesive programs revealed the artistic grandeur, the taste, and cinematic elegance of his films, particularly those made for Samuel Goldwyn (1936-46), in which the immortal images of cinematographer Gregg Toland accentuated brilliant performances. In my conversations with Wyler in Berkeley and, later, at Cannes and another tribute at the San Francisco International Film Festival, it was discernible that he had begun to enjoy the beginning of long-overdue accolades from his peers in Hollywood, which were to culminate in 1976 with the AFI's Life Achievement Award.

Wyler's initial luck was to be related to Carl Laemmle, the head of Universal Studios, the best of all possible uncles if one wished to seek his fortune in America. Herman describes Wyler's early involvement with the silent era with a witty insight into the moods of Laemmle's fluctuating tastes, and the coincidental development of Wyler's friendship with another European expatriate, Paul Kohner, later to become Hollywood's most prestigious agent. After an apprenticeship as a third assistant on Chaney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and work on minor productions during the regime of the young Irving Thalberg, Wyler soon realized that the role of director was his main ambition, and gradually worked his way upward as a director of two-reelers, mostly action films or Westerns. Ironically, during a studio lay-off period, Wyler worked as one of about 60 assistants on the chariot race sequence for the silent version of *Ben-Hur*, at MGM. Although this minor position got him rehired at Universal, there was no sense of a fate that would guide him to his future position as director of the remake, in 1959, also at MGM.

Of Wyler's early work during the 1930s, Herman collates many of the most interesting episodes of new-found friendships (particularly with both Walter and John Huston). The efforts of John Huston and Wyler to make a film version of Oliver La Farge's novel about Navajo life, *Laughing Boy*, is one of those absorbing episodes that indicate their interest in making the first major Hollywood film starring Native Americans. Unfortunately, they were both far ahead of their time: the crosscultural aspects of the plot were too risky for the censors and the film was later made by another studio (MGM, with Ramon Novarro and Lupe Velez as the Navajo lovers).

One wishes that Herman had had access to such rarities of this early period as *Glamour* and *The Gay Deception.* The latter is one of Wyler's most successful romantic comedies, with Francis Lederer at his most ingratiating matinee-idol best and Frances Dee displaying her talents as

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Herman's long section on the Goldwyn films contains the richest and most informative discussion of Wyler's film career. The director's creative collaborations with the great Bette Davis (first while on loan-out to Warners for *Jezebel* and *The Letter*) reach a peak with her malevolent portrayal in *The Little Foxes*. Wyler's work with Lillian Hellman is also important: he had directed *These Three* (1937)—a version of Hellman's first dramatic stage success, *The Children's Hour*—with fine performances by Merle Oberon, Miriam Hopkins, and Bonita Granville as the vicious schoolgirl who destroys the lives of her teachers. The underlying theme of lesbianism was changed by the censors to promiscuous sexuality, but the players, sharply etched by Gregg Toland's photography and Alfred Newman's haunting musical score, still held the dramatic impact of the play. The play was revived in the 1950s on Broadway, and its success led to Wyler and Hellman's decision to try a screen revival in 1961. By this time, they felt that the lesbian theme could be dramatized. I remember being seated at a sneak preview in front of Wyler and Hellman. At the conclusion of the screening, I heard her say, "Well, we missed it, again!" As Herman puts it: "Wyler's depiction of lesbianism as 'that kind of love' was coy and dated at best . . . he got scared. He said he couldn't do it."

Wyler's reputation as a directorial taskmaster is amusingly described by Herman in the reactions of such varied luminaries as Greer Garson, Montgomery Clift, Jean Simmons, and Wyler's old nemesis, Charles Bickford. The variety of Wyler's filmography is astonishing, and yet one feels that *The Best Years of Our Lives* represents a special moment in his career. It epitomizes the post-World War II atmosphere in America and it is Wyler's personal homage to his own participation in the war as an Air Force officer-director. His wartime documentary, *The Memphis Belle*, is a classic, too, and the events of this period are movingly told by Herman.

From 1949 to the end of his career (Wyler died in 1981), there is a succession of cinematic landmarks: the theater adaptations (*The Heiress*, *Detective Story*, and *The Desperate Hours*); the epics, like *Ben-Hur*; the star turns: *Roman Holiday* and *Funny Girl*, Wyler's only musical. Although Jan Herman does not analyze the films, he supplies a rich, humanistic tapestry to the everyday realities and tragedies of William Wyler's life, focusing upon his happy marriage and his children in addition to his clashes with antagonistic producers and temperamental stars. Wyler was too restless to write his own autobiography (or too reserved), but he would have liked this book. Once, after a long discussion with him about making his film version of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, I asked him if there was more to say about the controversial ending. After a pensive moment, he looked at me with a smile and said, very quietly, "There's *always* more."

Albert Johnson teaches at the University of California at Berkeley; he is a member of the *FQ* editorial board.

The Third Eye

Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle

By Fatimah Tobing Rony. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996. $49.95 cloth; $17.95 paper.

Critiques of ethnographic practices have now been intellectually fashionable for more than 15 years. Accordingly, there is no shortage of books and essays in which authors—anthropologists and cultural critics alike—take ethnographers to task for their representational infelicities. Among the most perspicacious and productive critiques have been those that have emerged from within anthropology, the academic discipline of which ethnography has long been a centerpiece. An ever-growing number of thoughtful works has made ethnographic practitioners more keenly aware of the nuanced dynamics of power relations implicit in the ethnographic enterprise, have stressed the importance of history in ethnographic research, and have demonstrated how ethnographic writing and film constitute highly particular versions of social reality. This ongoing disciplinary self-reflection has compelled anthropologists to come of age. Consequently, ethnographers today are generally much more conscious of the powerful and painful ramifications of incomplete, erroneous, or biased representations. There are very few contemporary ethnographers who believe that their books or films "capture" social reality; rather, they attempt, however imperfectly, to evoke the irreducible complexity of contemporary social worlds.

Cultural critics, on the other hand, are usually less concerned with refocusing ethnographic field methods or refining ethnographic representation than with setting the record straight. Writers like Trinh T. Min-ha and Marianna Torgovnik have considered the ethnographic from a highly critical historical focus. Trinh has described the colonialist, sexist, and racist underpinnings of early anthropology. Torgovnik has written about how anthropology's past epistemology helped to erect and reinforce the ethos of primitivism. From an anthropological vantage, these works are seen as both insightful and troubling. They are insightful because they compel anthropologists to confront the "sins" of their disciplinary past; they are troubling because they often gloss over the contributions of the anthropological present.

In many ways Fatimah Tobing Rony's thoroughly researched and beautifully written book, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*, is an extension and elaboration of Trinh's and Torgovnik's well-received works. Like her sister critics, she considers anthropology—by way of ethnographic film—from a historical vantage. Like her sister critics, she focuses upon the works of the ancestors—

an actress of extraordinary beauty, unusual wit, and sparkling comic style. Since the film is never shown, some of their recollections would have been very welcome. Wyler's more famous comedy, *The Good Fairy*, still holds its charm, and apparently the leading lady, Margaret Sullavan, was far less faerie and more fury, especially off-screen as Wyler's first wife.

Herman's long section on the Goldwyn films contains the richest and most informative discussion of Wyler's film career. The director's creative collaborations with the great Bette Davis (first while on loan-out to Warners for *Jezebel* and *The Letter*) reach a peak with her malevolent portrayal in *The Little Foxes*. Wyler's work with Lillian Hellman is also important: he had directed *These Three* (1937)—a version of Hellman's first dramatic stage success, *The Children's Hour*—with fine performances by Merle Oberon, Miriam Hopkins, and Bonita Granville as the vicious schoolgirl who destroys the lives of her teachers. The underlying theme of lesbianism was changed by the censors to promiscuous sexuality, but the players, sharply etched by Gregg Toland's photography and Alfred Newman's haunting musical score, still held the dramatic impact of the play. The play was revived in the 1950s on Broadway, and its success led to Wyler and Hellman's decision to try a screen revival in 1961. By this time, they felt that the lesbian theme could be dramatized. I remember being seated at a sneak preview in front of Wyler and Hellman. At the conclusion of the screening, I heard her say, "Well, we missed it, again!" As Herman puts it: "Wyler's depiction of lesbianism as 'that kind of love' was coy and dated at best . . . he got scared. He said he couldn't do it."

Wyler's reputation as a directorial taskmaster is amusingly described by Herman in the reactions of such varied luminaries as Greer Garson, Montgomery Clift, Jean Simmons, and Wyler's old nemesis, Charles Bickford. The variety of Wyler's filmography is astonishing, and yet one feels that *The Best Years of Our Lives* represents a special moment in his career. It epitomizes the post-World War II atmosphere in America and it is Wyler's personal homage to his own participation in the war as an Air Force officer-director. His wartime documentary, *The Memphis Belle*, is a classic, too, and the events of this period are movingly told by Herman.

From 1949 to the end of his career (Wyler died in 1981), there is a succession of cinematic landmarks: the theater adaptations (*The Heiress*, *Detective Story*, and *The Desperate Hours*); the epics, like *Ben-Hur*; the star turns: *Roman Holiday* and *Funny Girl*, Wyler's only musical. Although Jan Herman does not analyze the films, he supplies a rich, humanistic tapestry to the everyday realities and tragedies of William Wyler's life, focusing upon his happy marriage and his children in addition to his clashes with antagonistic producers and temperamental stars. Wyler was too restless to write his own autobiography (or too reserved), but he would have liked this book. Once, after a long discussion with him about making his film version of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, I asked him if there was more to say about the controversial ending. After a pensive moment, he looked at me with a smile and said, very quietly, "There's *always* more."

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The Third Eye

Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle

By Fatimah Tobing Rony. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996. $49.95 cloth; $17.95 paper.

Critiques of ethnographic practices have now been intellectually fashionable for more than 15 years. Accordingly, there is no shortage of books and essays in which authors—anthropologists and cultural critics alike—take ethnographers to task for their representational infelicities. Among the most perspicacious and productive critiques have been those that have emerged from within anthropology, the academic discipline of which ethnography has long been a centerpiece. An ever-growing number of thoughtful works has made ethnographic practitioners more keenly aware of the nuanced dynamics of power relations implicit in the ethnographic enterprise, have stressed the importance of history in ethnographic research, and have demonstrated how ethnographic writing and film constitute highly particular versions of social reality. This ongoing disciplinary self-reflection has compelled anthropologists to come of age. Consequently, ethnographers today are generally much more conscious of the powerful and painful ramifications of incomplete, erroneous, or biased representations. There are very few contemporary ethnographers who believe that their books or films "capture" social reality; rather, they attempt, however imperfectly, to evoke the irreducible complexity of contemporary social worlds.

Cultural critics, on the other hand, are usually less concerned with refocusing ethnographic field methods or refining ethnographic representation than with setting the record straight. Writers like Trinh T. Min-ha and Marianna Torgovnik have considered the ethnographic from a highly critical historical focus. Trinh has described the colonialist, sexist, and racist underpinnings of early anthropology. Torgovnik has written about how anthropology's past epistemology helped to erect and reinforce the ethos of primitivism. From an anthropological vantage, these works are seen as both insightful and troubling. They are insightful because they compel anthropologists to confront the "sins" of their disciplinary past; they are troubling because they often gloss over the contributions of the anthropological present.

In many ways Fatimah Tobing Rony's thoroughly researched and beautifully written book, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*, is an extension and elaboration of Trinh's and Torgovnik's well-received works. Like her sister critics, she considers anthropology—by way of ethnographic film—from a historical vantage. Like her sister critics, she focuses upon the works of the ancestors—

in her case the pictorial representations of Felix-Louis Regnault, Robert Flaherty, Edward Sheriff Curtis, F.W. Murnau, and Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack. Through her incisive readings of their productions (including *Nanook of the North*, *Moana*, *Tabu*, *Grass*, *Chang*, and *King Kong*) she demonstrates forcefully how their representational strategies not only muted peoples of color, but led to the construction of what she calls "the ethnographic," which is, in part, the metonymic reproduction of an entire society based, as it were, on field research in one village or footage from one film. Indeed, her aim is to argue that the (ethnographic) "cinema has been a primary means through which race and gender are visualized as natural categories; cinema has been the site of intersection between anthropology, popular culture, and the constructions of nation and empire" (9).

With regards to early anthropology, Rony makes her case quite impressively. She demonstrates decisively how the scientific positivism of Regnault, one of the first documentarians, became a rationale for subsequent ethnographic filmmaking. She also deconstructs Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*, often cited as the first ethnographic film, by fleshing out the sociocultural, historical, and political contexts that shaped the film's production. Her analysis of Cooper and Schoedsack's 1933 *King Kong* establishes how the scientific racism of that era constructed a racist and sexist popular consciousness of "exotic" others. Through her diligent efforts, Rony shows how evolutionary imaging shamelessly muted the voice of those in front of the camera.

Although the book is an impressive debut, it is not without problems. Rony's relative silence about contemporary ethnography in prose and film and her sometimes careless use of the terms anthropology and ethnographic—a use that occasionally and uncritically links past ideologies to present practices—may lead some readers to think that contemporary ethnographers, cinematic or otherwise, still harbor the racist, colonialist, and sexist ideologies of the vainglorious past. Even a casual perusal of what contemporary ethnographers have produced undermines such an assumption.

A more serious concern, however, is Rony's apparent lack of self-reflection. Like some of the ethnographers whom she criticizes, Rony establishes herself, from the very first page, as a privileged contemporary observer. Describing her reaction to watching *King Kong*, she says that "the savages are speaking my language. Tidak, Bisa, Kau. Like King Kong and the Islanders, I was born in two places, Sumatra and the United States: the daughter of a Batak mother from North Sumatra, and a father from Palenbang, in South Sumatra. I am watching myself being pictured as a Savage. I am the Bride of Kong" (3).

This passage is an affecting one, but it also demonstrates the sociological and philosophical complexities that rip through any act of observation. The "savages" may well be speaking Rony's language(s), but unlike "them" she not only speaks English, but writes beautiful English prose. Watching *King Kong* may well make her feel like the Bride of Kong, but the Bride of Kong probably didn't receive a Ph.D. in the United States. To paraphrase anthropologist Kirin Narayan, How native is the native observer? As Narayan, who was born and raised in Bombay, suggests, "[T]he loci along which we are aligned with or set apart from those whom we study are multiple and in flux. Factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race, or sheer duration of contacts may at different times outweigh the cultural identity we associate with insider or outsider status" (1993: 672).

There may well be what Rony calls "third eye" perception, in which "powerless" and "voiceless" Others manipulate images such that "the Savage parodies the Civilized" (213). But is it wise to essentialize any act of perception? To her credit, Rony is aware of the precariousness of essentialism, for "the critic may become the unwitting propagator of a new postcolonial form of fascinating cannibalism, a reification that further entrenches the categories of Same and Other, Western and Indigenous" (13). Had Rony been more thoroughly wary of these fundamental problems, the scholarly contributions of the book would have had broader disciplinary implications.

For their part, anthropologists should be grateful to critics like Rony. The magnitude of works like *The Third Eye* have refined our research methods and sensitized our prose and image-making. By the same token, cultural critics should try to avoid replacing one perceptual orthodoxy with another. In the end, the continuously shifting status of "insider" or "native" should not excuse any scholar from assessing critically and reflexively how elements of race, gender, and especially social class affect her or his own acts of perception and interpretation.

Paul Stoller teaches in the Anthropology Department at West Chester University, in Pennsylvania.

Visions of the East

Orientalism in Film

Edited by Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar. New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997. $50.00 cloth; $18.95 paper.

As I read this new anthology on Orientalism in Euro-American cinema, a phrase from *Casablanca* kept echoing in my mind: "Round up the usual suspects." The usual procedure, when compiling an anthology for classroom use, is to gather together some of the better-known essays and more established scholars working in a specific area. In the case of critical perspectives on representations of Asia and Asians, there has been almost an embarrassment of riches in recent years. Many film scholars, inspired by Edward Said and postcolonial theory, have turned their attention to Orientalism in American and European cinema, including mainstream commercial as well as documentary, experimental, video, and television material. However, Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar have a different strategy: many of the "usual suspects," namely, Sumiko Higashi, Caren Kaplan, Don Kirihara, Chris Holmlund,

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Patricia Zimmerman, Eric Smoodin, Nick Browne, Darrell Hamamoto, Susan Jeffords, Hamid Naficy, Rey Chow, Fatimah Tobing Rony, and Trinh T. Minh-ha, among many others, have not been rounded up. While some are mentioned in the bibliography and by the essayists included in the book, other important scholars do not even merit a footnote. Given that this anthology will serve as an introduction to the topic for students and also as a bibliographic resource for media scholars, these lacunae may lead many new to the field to think that little has been done in film studies on this topic.

The same can be said for the choice of films included for discussion. If there were three or four other comparable books available, it might make sense to include essays that only touch indirectly on Orientalism, like Adrienne L. McLean's entry on the musicals of Jack Cole and Dudley Andrew's essay which only obliquely deals with film depictions of French North Africa. However, teachers likely to use the anthology in a classroom might tend to screen *Casablanca*, *Morocco*, or *The World of Suzie Wong* rather than *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* or *Las Hurdes*. Other films receive too much attention. Two essays on *Pepe le Moko* seems like overkill. The book includes nothing on documentary or experimental film, even though many fine and relevant works exist by filmmakers and video artists like Deborah Gee, Kip Fulbeck, Fatimah Tobing Rony, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and many others, that specifically address the issue of Orientalism in the cinema.

The decision to follow Said and look at Orientalism in relation to European colonialism in North Africa and the Middle East rather than focusing on East, Southeast, South, and Central Asia and the Pacific is clear from the selection of essays. Hollywood and European films on China, Japan, India, the Philippines, and the Pacific Islands drift out of the picture. It might have made the collection stronger if this had been acknowledged at the outset, however. As it is, the two fine essays by Marina Heung and Phebe Shih Chao on Orientalism and East/Southeast Asian settings are isolated geographically. Similarly, the anthology's focus on films made before World War II tends to isolate the essays on more recent films, like Alan Nadel's on Disney's *Aladdin* and Heung's on *Indochine*. Given Said's careful research on the links between national politics, history, and colonial discourse, the anthology's scattered representation of historical periods, geographical locations, and political maneuverings weakens the collection.

The division of the anthology into "Historical and Generic Contexts" and "National Cinemas" seems arbitrary, since any given essay in either section could fit into the other quite easily. Indeed, this points to one of the weaknesses of the book. Rather than having a clear sense of the issues and theoretical approaches to Orientalism to be covered by the anthology, the editors seem to have taken a haphazard approach, too much on some topics and films, not enough on others, and absolutely nothing at all on certain key issues. For example, the "national cinemas" covered include only Britain, France, and the United States, excluding Holland, Portugal, Spain, Russia, Germany, and Italy. Moreover, the brief introductory essay by Matthew Bernstein does little to give the reader a sense of the scope of the topic, the particular and limited focus of this volume, and the controversies and current research now being conducted on Orientalism and the cinema.

Despite these negatives, the anthology does have some high points. Ella Shohat's "Gender and Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema" begins the anthology on a high note. Originally published in a special issue of *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* (1991) and subsequently forming part of *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, this essay rightly makes the issue of gender central to any discussion of Orientalism. However, this article also does something few others in the collection attempt: it juxtaposes Orientalist cinematic discourses and counterexamples. Rather than presenting a picture of Orientalism as purely a fantasy contrived by Euro-American colonialists for the oppression and impoverishment of Asia, this essay paints a strong picture of non-Western cinema in relation to Hollywood's domination of global screens. For example, Shohat's analysis of the Egyptian film *The Mummy/The Night of the Counting Years* (*Al Mumia*, Shadi Abdel Salam, 1969) examines the film in relation to Hollywood's own fascination with Egypt and mummies. This opens up the entire discussion of Orientalism to include media outside the West and their encounter with Orientalist ideology. Unfortunately, few of the other contributors follow Shohat's lead, and most of the volume looks only at Western filmmakers' and Western audiences' fascination with an imagined Orient, rather than at Asian (or Asian-American/Asian-European) filmmakers' responses to those fantasies.

It is also worth noting the two other outstanding essays included in the collection. Marina Heung's "The Family Romance of Orientalism: From *Madame Butterfly* to *Indochine*" (originally published in a special issue of *Genders*, [1995]) looks at a number of different texts (a photograph published in *France Soir*, the musical *Miss Saigon*, Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*, and the family epic *Indochine*) as examples of the ways in which Freud's "family romance" has acquired racial and ethnic overtones in the popular imagination. What makes Heung's essay so important is the global dimension she gives to her analysis. Rather than looking at fantasies involving transnational/cross-racial adoptions in terms of bilateral national relations, Heung looks at a web of ideologies and interests spanning several decades, various media, nations, ethnicities, genders, and generations.

Phebe Shih Chao's "Reading *The Letter* in a Postcolonial World" appears in print for the first time in this collection. By carefully looking at both the Wyler film and the Maugham short story on which it was based in light of Frantz Fanon's theories of colonialism and decolonization, Chao goes beyond treating the narrative as a story about the corruption of Europeans by the "Orient." Rather, Chao looks at the ethnic mixture depicted in the film in terms of the subtle changes made by Wyler to the original story. Chao maintains that Wyler has a different perspective on the

colonial environment dealt with in the tale because of his own Jewish ethnicity and status as immigrant and outsider within the mainstream of American life. Chao persuasively argues that Wyler worked around the Hayes Code to underscore the corruption of the British, and she reads between the lines of both texts to tease out the historical underpinnings of the representation of the Chinese community in both works. It is fitting that the volume ends with this essay. Chao challenges scholars to look at Orientalism beyond Western fantasies of the East. The realities of a postcolonial world demand a careful rereading of Orientalist discourses in light of new economic, political, ethnic, and cultural configurations.

We seem to be living in the age of the anthology. Unfortunately, I am not so sure that they all really make a contribution to the advancement of research in film studies. Some may be useful in the classroom as introductions to an area and as bibliographic resources. Others do bring to the fore important work by younger scholars or work published in places not frequented by most film studies academicians. However, the vast majority, and I am afraid I would include *Visions of the East* in this category, strain to flesh out a collection with material which is either readily available or not really germane to the topic. It can be hoped, however, that the appearance of this volume will stimulate further research into Orientalism and the cinema, given the importance of this area of inquiry to film and cultural studies generally.

Gina Marchetti is the author of *Romance and the "Yellow Peril": Race, Sex and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (1993).

Without Lying Down

Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Early Hollywood

By Cari Beauchamp. New York: Scribner, 1997. $30.00 cloth/ University of California Press, 1998. $17.95 paper.

This ample new biography of Frances Marion moves its subject from a footnote in film history to center stage. Marion wrote several hundred feature films in the more than three decades she worked for the Hollywood studios; she also doctored scripts, directed, produced, and—on occasion—acted. She was a founding member of the Screen Writers Guild, exchanged barbs with the Algonquin wits, and travelled regularly to Europe—even spending the last weeks of World War I as a war correspondent, filming the work of the Allied women for the Committee on Public Information.

Beauchamp's impressive research fits comfortably with her narrative style; she knowledgeably situates Marion among her contemporaries (among them her close friends Mary Pickford, Marie Dressler, Hedda Hopper, Anita Loos, and Adela Rogers St. Johns) and within an evolving industry without sacrificing her first responsibility to her subject. In fact, a striking accomplishment of Beauchamp's book is the way it extends and occasionally challenges Marion's own published version of her life. Extensive contact with Marion's family members brought access to a longer, manuscript version of her autobiography, and Beauchamp mines it skillfully; this uncensored account offers a more biting, incisive version of the experiences Marion recounts in the volume she published a year before her death in 1973. *Off With Their Heads!* was presented as "a serio-comic tale of Hollywood," and contained numerous vivid episodes, like Louis B. Mayer's first encounter with Mickey Mouse (who he insisted would frighten pregnant women); Marion's friendship with neighbor Rudolph Valentino ("a simple peasant boy" who loved gardening and planned to grow grapes in his retirement); and a brooding account of Jean Harlow's marriage to Paul Bern. Most of these episodes find their way into Beauchamp's book, where they are measured against an impressive array of contemporary sources—trade journals, fan magazines, studio archives, personal correspondence, and other memoirs and histories of the period.

The Frances Marion of *Off With Their Heads!*—a playful, creative, and above all resilient professional—emerges here, too, but Beauchamp's probing research also reveals a more conflicted woman. Marion was hospitalized several times for exhaustion and grief after the suicide of her sister and the tragic death of her third husband Fred Thomson (who fathered her two sons and whom she always considered her great love). These events are scarcely mentioned in her own book. A short-lived marriage (to her fourth husband, director George Hill) was omitted entirely, in spite of the fact that Marion stayed close to him and his family for the rest of her life. She formed exceptionally close attachments to people and was known for writing roles for out-of-work friends into her scripts: Marie Dressler came back from virtual penury to win an Oscar for Best Actress after Marion intervened on her behalf. She quietly paid friends' bills, and even their children's school tuition during tough times. Her generosity was so infamous that George Hill (from whom she was then divorced) stipulated in his will that his legacy to her was not to be given away.

Collaboration is not always a writer's strong suit, but here, too, Marion was exceptional. When Mary Pickford was at the height of her popularity and railing against her juvenile image, she and Marion tried to dream up new roles which the public would accept: it didn't work, but together they produced some of Pickford's most memorable parts. Marion collaborated with her husband Fred Thomson on a series of popular Westerns which featured Thomson astride Silver King, a horse he had (literally) groomed for stardom. Marion had a hand in casting many of the films she scripted, at least partly because she learned to tailor roles to fit the talents she found intriguing: when Wallace Beery's way of eating spaghetti in the studio commissary reminded her of a prisoner she'd seen on a research trip to San Quentin, she shaped an important role in *The Big House* around Beery's "gentle crassness" (258). The scripts for Marion's silent pictures bristle with directions for both actors and camera, and films like *The Scarlet Letter* show that her suggestions were often used. Characteristically, in the manual Marion wrote

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for aspiring screenwriters in 1937, instructions for working within the studio system feature prominently.

She was an exceptionally shrewd team player, and worked easily alongside the powerful men of Hollywood, among them Harry Cohn, William Randolph Hearst, William Fox, Clarence Brown, and Edmund Goulding. Hired to write scenarios for Cosmopolitan, Marion continually pressured Hearst to allow Marion Davies more freedom to play comic roles. She spoke fearlessly to the man who signed her (large) paychecks and they enjoyed mutual respect, though Marion lost her battle to see Davies' natural ebullience up on the screen. She especially valued her rapport with Irving Thalberg. A longtime freelancer who moved between studios at whim, Marion settled at MGM in 1926 largely because of the opportunity to work closely with Thalberg. Even this relationship, however, was not free of snags: when Thalberg asked Marion to write a new ending for *The Wind*, she and Lillian Gish protested—to no avail. Torn between her realization that she "would write a happy ending for Romeo and Juliet" if forced, Marion nevertheless resented being asked time and again to "distort Tolstoy" (208; 218). She preferred writing original stories for the screen over the adaptations to which the studio routinely assigned her; in fact, Marion was a prolific writer, publishing numerous books of her own fiction. Her efforts to organize fellow writers into the Screen Writers Guild eventually drew Thalberg's wrath: he accused her of personal betrayal and asked her to withdraw from the organization (she refused). When Thalberg threatened to close the studio if a writers' strike materialized, Marion was forced to concede that the man she had idolized as a "benign teacher" was also a "little czar" (331).

But Marion reserved her greatest scorn for Louis B. Mayer and Joseph Kennedy. With the former, she had years of personal experience. From their first meeting (when he pinched her rear end), through countless confrontations over the films on which they worked, she grew to dislike him intensely, finding him crude, pompous, hypocritical, and cruel. She also believed that he had hustled Thalberg into an early grave. Several times their antagonism drove her away from MGM, but the work always drew her back. Yet when Mayer was himself forced out of the studio in 1948, after 25 years, Marion expressed her sympathy for him: "Whatever antagonism I had harbored against L.B. Mayer, I forgot in those few moments before he left the studio; it was as if you had seen a man being drained of his own blood" (363). But she never forgave Joseph Kennedy, who financed Fred Thomson's pictures, for withholding her husband's films from the market, which precipitated a depression from which he never recovered.

However, most of Marion's working relations were both cordial and enduring, and her career's longevity was due in part to her ability to nurture these professional associations through rapidly evolving industrial conditions; hers is a story of striking personal and professional continuity. Her colleagues often turned into friends, and Marion never turned a friend away. Mary Pickford and she first met in 1914, and Marion quickly began writing—and soon even ghostwriting—for Pickford. Though her affection for Douglas Fairbanks cooled early, and Marion found herself impatient with Pickford's vacillations about their marriage, she stuck by Mary through the years, always responding to her summons from Pickfair, comforting Mary when her beloved mother died, and defending her as reports of her private drinking circulated. Fellow screenwriter Anita Loos shared with Marion a light-hearted public persona that was at odds with their commitment to writing first-rate scripts: both were "uniquely disciplined workers in a Hollywood full of diversions" (79). Only a failed collaboration on a Broadway play in 1948 could strain their longstanding rapport. Beauchamp also documents Marion's long-lived friendships with Adela Rogers St. Johns, ZaSu Pitts, Marie Dressler, Hedda Hopper, and Bess Meredyth, as well as her uncensored (mostly generous) opinions of Lillian Gish, Greta Garbo, Lois Weber, and Gloria Swanson.

Frances Marion appears in these pages as a thoroughly professional woman who combined intelligence with loyalty: though she always tried to write parts for her friends into her scripts, it was never at the expense of the film's integrity. Her judgment of people—both those she knew and those she imagined—was so acute that she was able to write compelling scripts for decades, outlasting several generations of screenwriters. As a portrait of a woman who achieved both stature and tenure in a fickle business, *Without Lying Down* is exemplary. Beauchamp balances Marion's own memoir, which is terrifically colorful but lacks introspection, with an extensive exploration of the balancing act her subject performed as a woman in Hollywood. The book's subtitle is more than justified, as Marion's deepest professional and personal commitments were to the powerful women with whom she shared the screen.

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Clark, Danae. *Negotiating Hollywood: The Cultural Politics of Actors' Labor.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. $44.95; $17.95. Danae Clark is one of the most versatile and original scholars working in film studies and cultural studies. Her essay, "Commodity Lesbianism," has become an absolutely standard text, and now, with *Negotiating Hollwood*, she has written one of the most significant film history monographs of recent years. Clark's book seeks to shift the terrain of industrial history from the film (what it cost, censorship battles, etc.) to the day-to-day labor involved in making it, and specifically to the labor of actors at the Hollywood studios. In doing so, she has also shifted our understanding of "star studies" from an analysis of the text (how a certain star might "signify" in a given film) to an analysis of working conditions. Clark concentrates on just a few months in 1933, months that included the application of the National Recovery Act to all employees at the studios and also the formation of the Screen Actors Guild. Just as importantly, Clark studies not only major players but also marginal and therefore constantly exploited labor like extras and stand-ins. In so doing, Clark has given us a compelling history of a specific type of work, and has also produced a nuanced study of the manner in which history itself comes to be produced and who gets left out in the process, and how certain periods and genres of historical writing come to be prioritized over others. By focusing on actors' labor power and their own, sometimes limited, sometimes extensive, agency within the Hollywood system, *Negotiating Hollywood* successfully demonstrates the importance of coming to "understand the actor as a historical subject who actively negotiates the economic, political, and ideological discourses of identity" (12).

Eric Smoodin

Harding, Colin, and Simon Popple, eds. *In the Kingdom of the Shadows: A Companion to Early Cinema.* Cygnus Arts/Fairleigh Dickenson University Press, 1997. $55.00. An unusually well-rounded account of the new medium, this collection of contemporary observations and reports, mostly British and all dating from before the First World War, has been selected with a view to their interest for the historian and the serious film student. Containing as it does

information never reprinted elsewhere, it will be valuable for years to come both as a source book on its subject and as a supplement to the existing literature.

The editors have organized the material under thematic headings: its first impact on viewers; discovery of its applications to journalism, science, art, etc. Of greatest interest to this reader was its evidence on the ways in which early films were exhibited in Britain. For a variety of reasons, the introduction of intertitles occured later there than it did elsewhere—texts dating from 1901, 1906, 1908, and 1909 refer in passing to lecturers conducting film shows, and, of the book's profusion of illustrations, one shows a lecturer in action in a picture palace in 1913, striking evidence of how hard that practice died, for by 1913 intertitling had made great headway, the earliest reference to it here occurring in a 1912 text.

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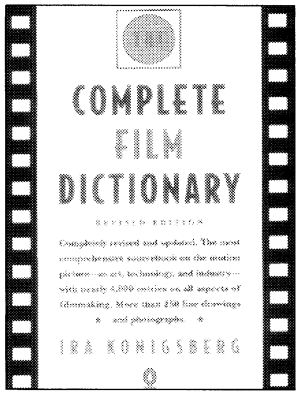

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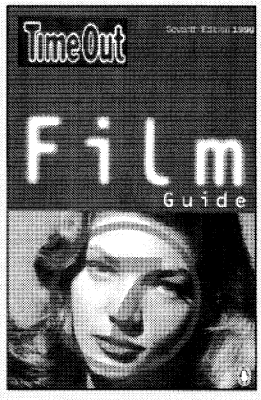

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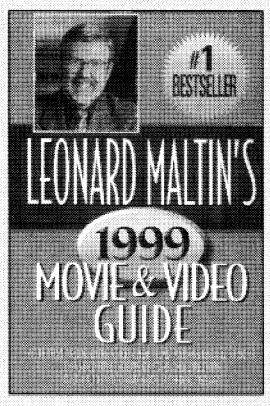

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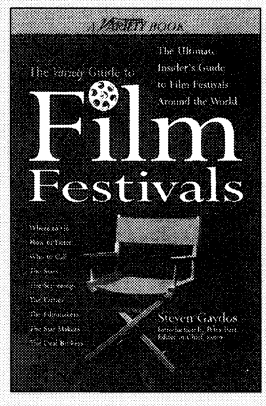

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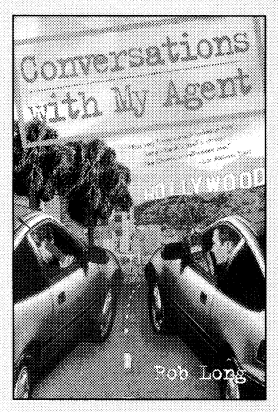

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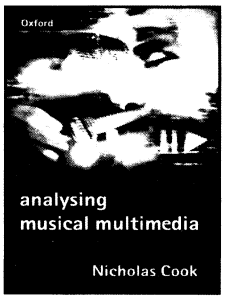

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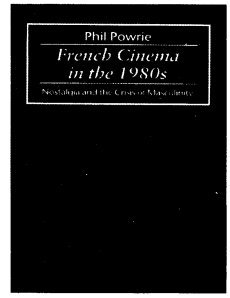

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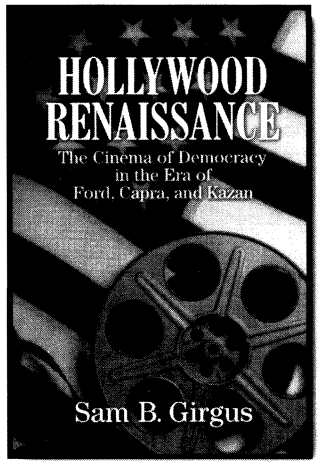

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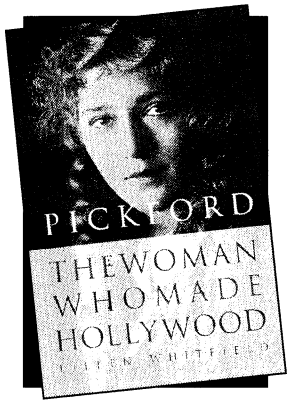

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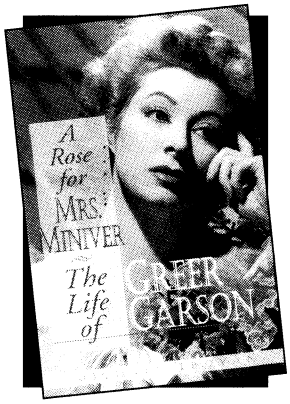

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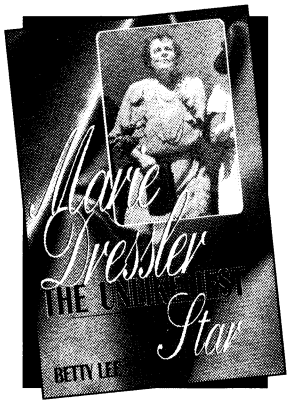

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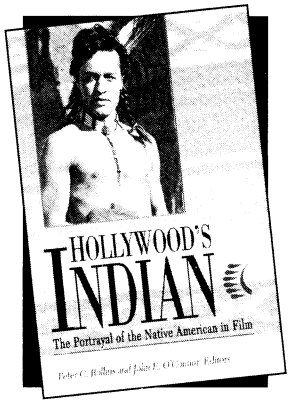

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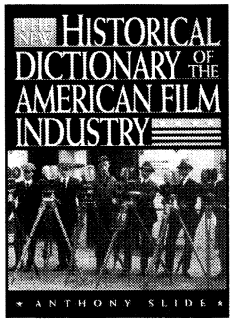

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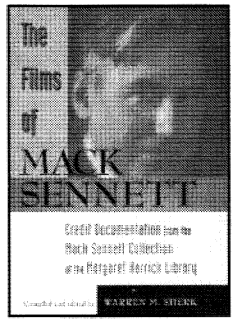

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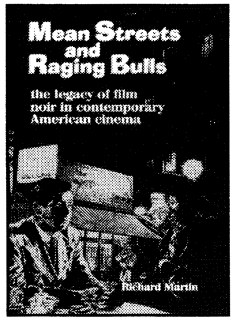

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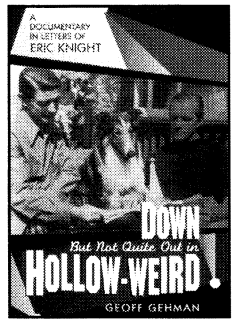

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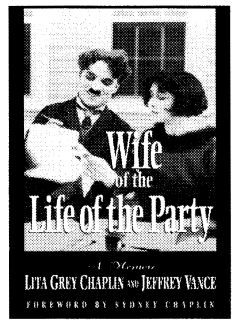

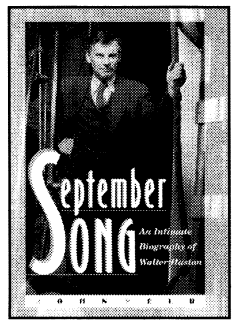

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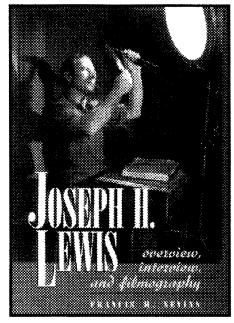

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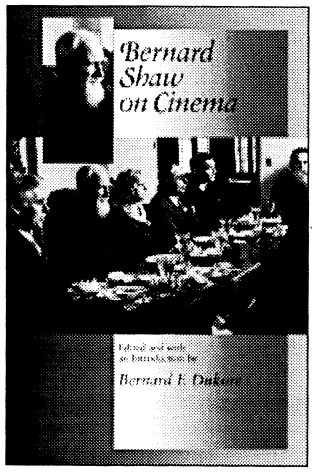

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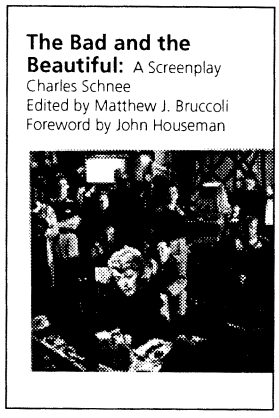

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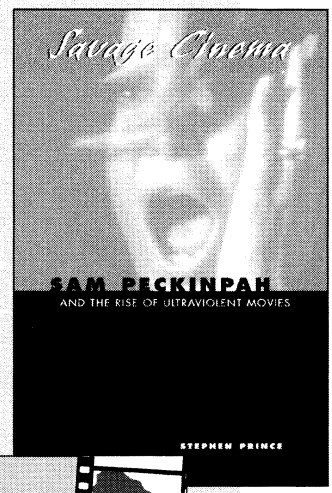

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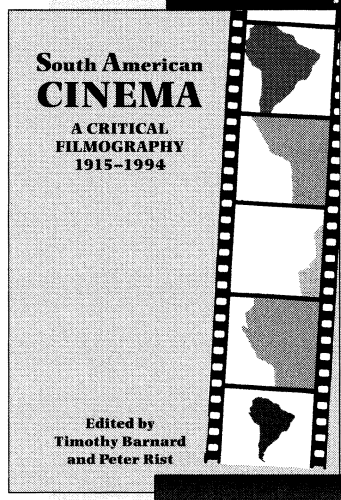

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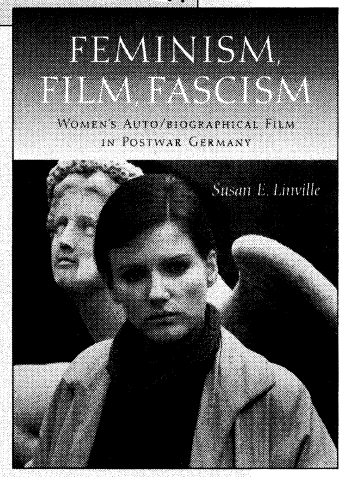

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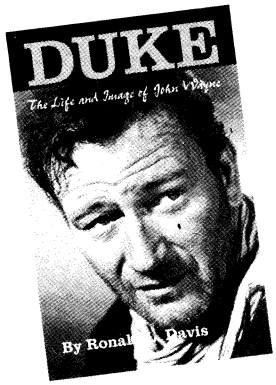

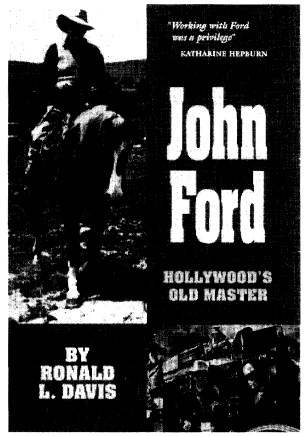

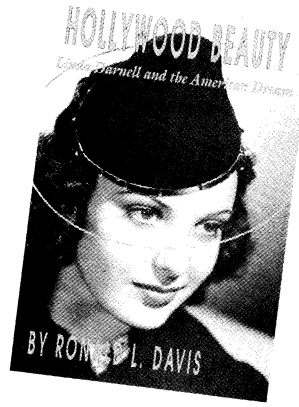

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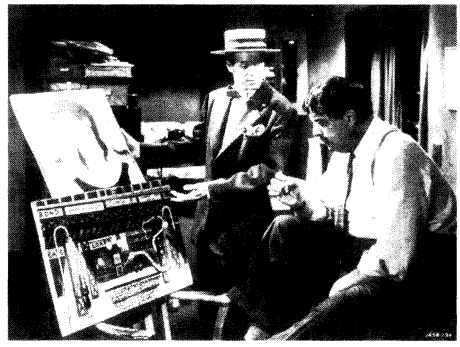

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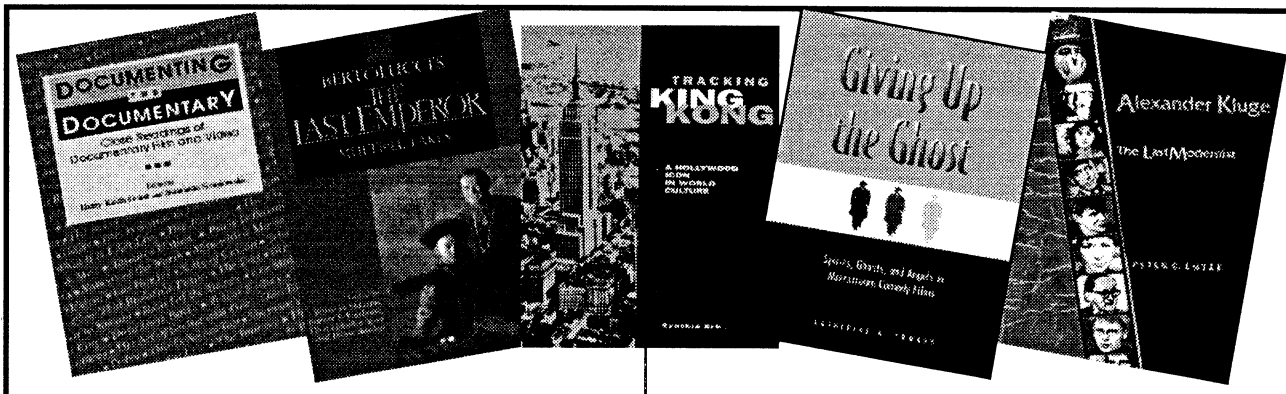

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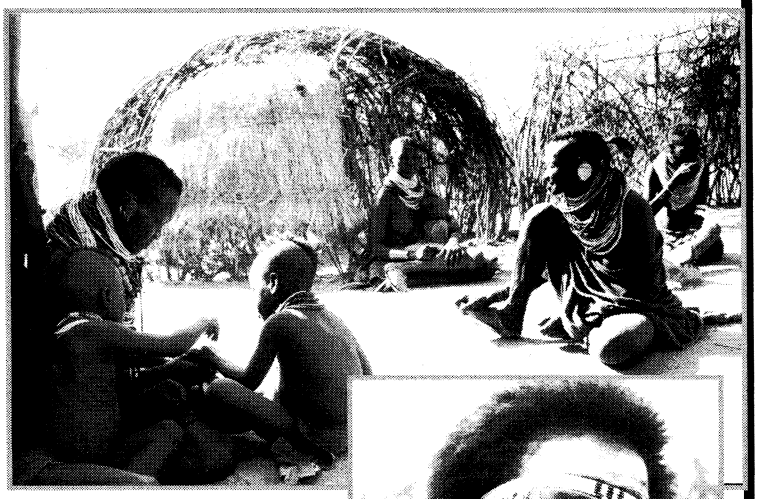

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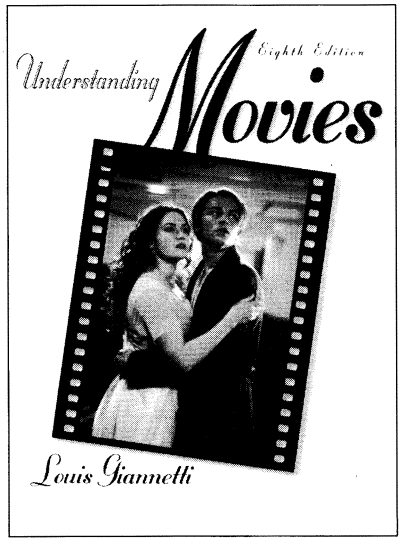

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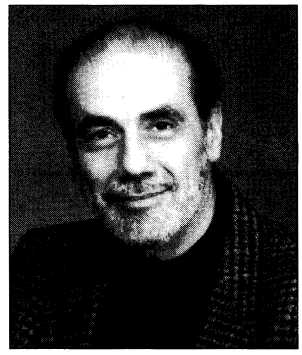

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